

RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY



Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Updated by	Kirsty James
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Next Review Date	September 2027
Statutory Policy	Yes
On school website	Yes

1. Introduction and Aims

This policy outlines the approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at Riverside Primary School. RSE is defined as learning about the emotional, social, and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, and reproduction, enabling pupils to develop the knowledge, skills, and values needed to form healthy, respectful relationships and make informed choices.

Relationships Education is statutory for all pupils, while Sex Education beyond the science curriculum is optional and taught in Year 6, following parental consultation.

Our RSE curriculum ensures that pupils receive accurate information about the body and reproduction and develop essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful, and non exploitative relationships, both on and offline. RSE also plays a vital role in meeting the school's safeguarding obligations as outlined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025)*.

At Riverside, RSE is taught primarily within the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Some aspects are also covered through:

- Science lessons
- Computing
- Circle time
- Assemblies
- Stories
- PE, in the context of health and hygiene

Our RSE provision aims to create a safe, inclusive environment where pupils learn to form healthy relationships and make informed choices. The aims of RSE at Riverside Primary School are to:

- Provide a consistent standard of relationships, sex, and health education across the school
- Help pupils develop feelings of self respect, confidence, and empathy
- Promote responsible behaviour and respect for others
- Create a positive culture of communication around relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Provide a framework for sensitive discussions
- Prepare pupils for puberty and teach the importance of health and hygiene
- Ensure pupils are well equipped for the secondary RSHE curriculum

2. Policy Development

This policy was developed in consultation with staff, pupils, parents, and governors to ensure that it reflects the values and ethos of Riverside Primary School. The PSHE/RSE Lead coordinated the review process, drawing on statutory guidance and the Kapow Primary scheme to ensure consistency and compliance.

The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

- Review: A member of staff or working group gathered all relevant national and local guidance to inform the policy.
- Staff consultation: All school staff were given the opportunity to review the draft policy and make recommendations.
- Parent consultation: Parents were sent a copy of the policy and invited to share their views via a questionnaire.
- Ratification: Once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and formally ratified.

Feedback from staff, pupils, and parents helped shape the content and approach, ensuring that the policy meets the needs of our school community and supports safe, inclusive, and effective practice.

3. Statutory requirements

Current regulations and statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) state that Relationships & Health Education must be taught in all primary schools in England from September 2020. This guidance was updated in July 2025 for implementation from September 2026.

Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools, but the DfE recommends that primaries teach sex education in Years 5 and/or 6, in line with content about conception and birth, which forms part of the National curriculum for science. The National curriculum for science includes subject content in related areas, such as the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals.

The statutory guidance document has been reviewed to ensure that our school policy and approach are in line with statutory requirements and established best practice. Information on statutory requirements, including the current statutory guidance document from the DfE, can be found in [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance](#)

At Riverside, we deliver RSE, as set out in this policy, in line with current statutory duties and requirements.

Legislation and guidance documents that inform our school's RSE policy include:

- Education Act (1996)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Keeping children safe in education (2025)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2025)

The school ensures that RSE is delivered in a way that:

- Upholds safeguarding responsibilities and promotes pupils' welfare.
- Reflects the school's values and ethos of respect, inclusion and equality.
- Is accessible to all pupils, including those with SEND.
- Is regularly reviewed in line with updates to *KCSIE 2026* and any revisions to *RSHE statutory guidance* once published.

4. Definitions

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) supports pupils' emotional, social, and cultural development. It involves learning about relationships, healthy lifestyles, diversity, and personal identity. RSHE combines accurate information with opportunities to explore values, attitudes, and personal experiences in a safe, inclusive environment.

According to DfE statutory guidance (2020):

- **Relationships Education** focuses on the building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships - including friendships, family relationships, and respectful interactions with others, both in person and online.
- **Health Education** teaches pupils about the characteristics of good physical health and mental wellbeing, emphasising the positive two way relationship between physical and mental health and recognising that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life.
- **Sex Education** teaches pupils how human reproduction occurs, including how a baby is conceived and born. This draws on the national curriculum for science and may include additional non-statutory content identified within this policy, such as the physical changes associated with puberty.

Relationships Education and RSE are not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity. Instead, they support understanding and acceptance of the diverse relationships that exist within our school community, in modern Britain and beyond.

5. Curriculum

Our RSE curriculum is embedded within the PSHE curriculum. At Riverside, we follow the Kapow Primary PSHE and RSE scheme of work, adapting content where needed to meet pupils' differing needs. Kapow provides a spiral curriculum with progressive relationships lessons for each year group. The scheme is co-authored by specialists and supports teachers with subject knowledge and high quality resources.

Kapow lessons are reviewed annually to ensure alignment with updated Department for Education guidance and local safeguarding priorities. Lessons are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to pupils' developmental stages, providing opportunities to explore relationships, health, and human development through discussion, reflection, and practical activities.

Relationships Education/RSE is taught gradually across key stages so that learning builds year by year in a way that is appropriate to pupils' age and maturity. This approach responds to the pupils' needs and supports them to manage the opportunities and challenges they may face as they grow up.

In line with Department for Education guidance, Riverside Primary School distinguishes between statutory and non-statutory elements of RSE. Statutory content is taught through Science and Health Education, while non-statutory Sex Education is offered in Year 6 following parental consultation.

Statutory Science content relating to human development, including how a baby is conceived and born, and the physical changes associated with puberty is taught within the Science curriculum. These lessons focus on the biological aspects of growth and reproduction and are a statutory requirement for all pupils.

Kapow Primary's RSHE scheme complements this by exploring the emotional and social aspects of puberty within Health Education. Lessons help pupils understand the feelings, relationships, and personal responsibilities that accompany physical change, ensuring that learning is both factual and supportive.

Non-statutory Sex Education that extends beyond the Science curriculum is delivered in Year 6 to prepare pupils for transition to secondary school. Teaching is factual, age-appropriate, and delivered sensitively to promote respect, reassurance, and responsibility.

Parents are informed in advance and retain the right to withdraw their child from non-statutory Sex Education.

The Kapow Primary RSE and PSHE scheme develops pupils' knowledge, skills, and attributes through seven key areas:

- My Healthy Self
- Connecting with Others
- The Online World
- Citizenship
- Health Protection
- Staying Safe
- Growing Up

Elements of RSE are also delivered through other areas of the curriculum, including:

- Computing: online safety and respectful communication
- Circle time and assemblies: emotional literacy, friendship, and wellbeing
- Stories and literature: empathy, diversity, and personal identity
- PE and Health Education: hygiene, body awareness, and self-care
- Responsible Behaviour Curriculum: promoting kindness, respect, and accountability in daily interactions, reinforcing the principles of emotional literacy and positive relationships.

Lessons teach pupils how to keep themselves safe in the physical world and online, understand body changes, and know what to do if they are worried. Opportunities to link learning, integrate teaching, and promote whole school wellbeing are embedded throughout.

Teaching is underpinned by the school's safeguarding principles and promotes respect, equality, and inclusion. Lessons are adapted to meet the needs of all learners, including those with SEND, ensuring that every pupil can access and engage with the content.

6. Delivery of RSE

Our Relationships Education/RSE curriculum is delivered predominantly by teachers or other staff within our school from Years 1 to 6 and forms part of our timetabled Personal, Social, Health & Economic (PSHE) education programme.

Creating a safe learning environment is a vital part of effective Relationships Education/RSE delivery, particularly where sensitive or complex issues may be explored. Our school supports pupils to develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about relationships in a safe and secure way.

To support this, a range of strategies are used, including:

- Establishing clear ground rules or learning agreements with pupils on boundaries in lessons
- Using distancing techniques (fictional scenarios, characters, stories)
- Understanding how to discuss sensitive topics, questions or comments from pupils

- Using age appropriate resources
- Anonymous question boxes
- Opportunities for reflection and discussion

External visitors may support delivery where appropriate. All visitors follow Riverside policies and are supervised by school staff.

Teaching staff aim to answer questions honestly and factually, within the scope of the curriculum. Where a question is not age-appropriate, falls outside the curriculum, or a member of staff does not feel it is appropriate to answer in class, pupils may be supported individually or signposted to parents or carers, who have the primary responsibility for discussing sensitive matters.

Parents will be informed that their child has asked a question which they may need to follow up with their child and offer guidance for discussing it at home if needed. If teachers have concerns regarding any question asked by pupils, they follow school safeguarding procedures.

As part of our Relationships Education/RSE delivery, pupils are supported to understand who they can speak to in school if they have concerns or worries about anything that has been covered. Building children's ability to understand that there is always help available from trusted adults is an important cross cutting element of our PSHE and RSE provision. We also signpost pupils to other reliable external service and sources of help and support, such as Childline.

7. Parents' right to withdraw

The role of parents in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. Parents are the first teachers of their children and have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships.

At Riverside, we are committed to working closely with parents to ensure that we create the best possible Relationships Education/Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) curriculum for our pupils, while also supporting parents in the conversations they may have with their children around these topics. We aim to build a partnership approach with parents towards Relationships Education/RSE provision, where transparency and respectful understanding are the basis for all discussions. Parents are always welcome to contact the school to view resources and discuss any questions or concerns with the headteacher or subject lead.

The parental right to withdraw pupils from RSE remains in primary education for aspects of sex education which are not part of the Science curriculum. Parents/carers have the legal right to withdraw their child from some or all of sex education, with the exception of the biological aspects included in the national curriculum for Science. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

If a parent/carer wishes to withdraw their child from some or all of sex education, they can contact the Headteacher, who will arrange a meeting to discuss the request, share curriculum materials, and ensure parents are fully informed about lesson content and purpose.

The school will fulfil its responsibility to ensure children withdrawn from sex education receive purposeful education during the withdrawal period by providing supervised, appropriate learning that supports their wider personal development.

The school works with parents and pupils to monitor and revisit the choice to withdraw at regular intervals, ensuring decisions remain in the best interests of the child and reflect their maturity and needs.

8. Inclusive Practice and SEND

Riverside Primary School is committed to ensuring that all pupils can access and benefit from high quality Relationships and Sex Education. Teaching reflects the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice (2015), recognising that pupils may have differing developmental stages, learning needs, or vulnerabilities.

Our school recognises that there are different ethnic, religious and cultural beliefs and attitudes around Relationships Education/RSE topics, as well as acknowledging that pupils may come from a variety of different family types and backgrounds. These differences are reflected through teaching and resources that promote diversity and inclusion in Relationships Education/RSE.

During PSHE and RSE sessions, objective discussion of the diversity of the community we serve, and wider society in modern Britain, is approached in a sensitive and age-appropriate manner so that all pupils have access to lessons that are inclusive and based on a factual understanding of the law. We are mindful of statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted, and of the legal responsibilities placed upon schools by the Equality Act (2010) to promote inclusion, mutual respect and the protection of protected characteristics. Relationships Education/RSE provides an opportunity to support the discharge of these duties in a safe and appropriate environment. The full Act can be viewed here: [Equality Act 2010](#)

All schools in England have a legal responsibility to eliminate discrimination and are required to raise pupils' understanding and awareness of diversity and to promote respectful relationships with those who are different from them.

Every pupil deserves the opportunity to experience, participate in, and achieve an understanding of RSE that meets their individual needs. Lessons are differentiated and adapted to ensure accessibility for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities.

Preparation for Puberty:

Children of the same age may be developmentally at different stages, leading to differing types of questions or behaviours. Teaching methods take account of these differences, including those arising from specific educational needs or disabilities. Discussion may take place in small groups or one-to-one settings where appropriate.

Support for Boys and Girls:

The school considers what is most appropriate to deliver in whole class or single sex settings. Topics such as menstruation, masturbation, and wet dreams may be taught in single sex groups to ensure comfort and understanding.

Teachers ensure that materials and teaching do not conflict with religious or cultural principles and that all pupils receive a graduated, age appropriate programme of Relationships Education, delivered in accordance with statutory guidance and relevant legislation.

RSE is accessible for all pupils through personalised approaches that reduce barriers to learning and ensure emotional safety. Staff are alert to pupils who may be more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying, or other risks due to the nature of their SEND profile, and provide additional pastoral support as needed..

9. Safeguarding

Child protection, safeguarding, and confidentiality protocols underpin all aspects of RSE at Riverside Primary School. Teaching takes place within a framework that prioritises pupils' safety, wellbeing, and emotional security. Staff follow the school's Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) guidance at all times.

Protocols are in place for pupils who may have particular vulnerabilities or be considered 'at risk'. Staff are trained to recognise signs of vulnerability, respond sensitively, and ensure pupils receive timely support from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or other appropriate professionals.

Lessons are designed to create safe learning environments. Teachers establish clear ground rules, use distancing techniques, and teach through fictional or impersonal scenarios so pupils are never required to share personal experiences. This approach helps pupils explore sensitive topics safely and respectfully.

Visitors and external agencies are briefed on confidentiality and safeguarding procedures before working with pupils. They are expected to follow the school's approach to RSE, including agreed language, boundaries, and procedures for managing disclosures or concerns.

Confidentiality is explained clearly to pupils so they understand that while their questions and contributions are respected, staff cannot promise to keep information confidential if it indicates a pupil may be at risk of harm. Any concerns arising during RSE lessons are managed in line with the school's safeguarding procedures and referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

10. Safe and Effective Practice

RSE is taught safely and effectively within a clear framework that promotes respect, inclusion, and emotional wellbeing. Teachers establish safe learning environments by agreeing ground rules, using distancing techniques, and responding to pupils' questions sensitively and appropriately.

Staff receive ongoing professional development to ensure RSE is delivered confidently and in line with statutory guidance. This includes annual updates on RSHE requirements and safeguarding, training on inclusive practice and SEND differentiation, and support in delivering sensitive content effectively.

Lessons use the Kapow Primary PSHE and RSE scheme of work, adapted for inclusivity and accessibility. Teaching is age appropriate, inclusive, and responsive to pupils' needs, with differentiated tasks, visual scaffolds, and symbol supported materials to ensure accessibility for all learners.

10. Openness and Engagement with Parents

Parents are informed about the RSE policy through regular communication and updates shared via the school website, newsletters, and the Kapow Parent Portal. The policy is available to parents through the school website and on request from the school office, ensuring full transparency.

We are committed to openness with parents through clear communication, opportunities to view teaching materials, and ongoing consultation about curriculum content. The Kapow Parent Portal provides an overview of the RSE curriculum, while the school website hosts the full RSE policy and curriculum map, offering clear information about lesson themes and progression from Year 1 to Year 6. Lesson resources and teaching materials will also be shared with parents on request, ensuring transparency and enabling families to understand how sensitive topics are taught.

Kapow's updated RSE and PSHE scheme includes enhanced parental support, offering clear curriculum overviews, guidance on sensitive topics, supporting videos and presentations, and a dedicated Parent Information Zone with FAQs.

Parent letters are sent out prior to the teaching of statutory content in each year group, outlining the topics to be covered and offering opportunities for parents to discuss any questions or concerns with their class teacher or the PSHE/RSE Lead. Parents are

welcome to view teaching resources and lesson materials on request, and links to relevant resources will be sent out to parents to support transparency and shared understanding of how sensitive topics are taught.

Governors contribute to the RSE policy and are informed about the curriculum through regular reports, policy reviews, and updates from the PSHE/RSE Lead. Pupil voice is used to review and tailor our RSE programme to match the different needs of pupils, ensuring the curriculum remains relevant, inclusive, and responsive to the school community.

11. Roles and responsibilities

Governing board

The Governing Body holds overall responsibility for the school's RSE policy, ensuring it meets statutory requirements and reflects the school's ethos and values. Governors approve the policy, monitor its implementation, and review its impact regularly. At least one governor should be part of the working group that develops and reviews the policy. The Governing Body also ensures that parental consultation takes place and that the policy is accessible to all stakeholders through publication on the school website.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently and effectively across the school. They oversee curriculum implementation, uphold statutory and safeguarding requirements, and manage any parental requests to withdraw pupils from the non statutory or non science components of RSE . The Headteacher also supports staff through training and monitoring to ensure high quality, inclusive delivery.

PSHE/RSHE Lead

The PSHE subject lead is responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring the RSE curriculum. They provide planning support and resources to staff, ensuring that teaching is inclusive, age appropriate, and reflects current DfE and PSHE Association guidance.

Staff

Staff are responsible for delivering RSE in a sensitive, inclusive, and age appropriate way, modelling positive attitudes and values throughout teaching. They monitor pupil progress, respond to individual needs, and manage discussions with professionalism and care. Staff must respond appropriately to pupils whose parents choose to withdraw them from the non statutory or non science elements of RSE. All staff at Riverside are expected to teach RSE as part of the curriculum; there is no right to opt out. Any staff with concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss these with the Headteacher.

12. Professional Development and Training

Staff receive ongoing professional development to ensure RSE is taught safely, confidently, and in line with statutory guidance. This includes annual updates on RSHE requirements and safeguarding, training on inclusive practice and SEND differentiation, and support in delivering sensitive content effectively.

All staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction, and RSE training is included in the school's continuing professional development calendar. Staff have access Kapow Primary guidance, model lessons, and high quality resources. Opportunities for peer observation, coaching, and sharing good practice are provided to strengthen consistency and build staff confidence across the school.

The headteacher may invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

The school's RSE provision is monitored and evaluated by the PSHE/RSE Lead and Senior Leadership Team, and reported on through curriculum reviews, staff feedback, and governor updates. Regular monitoring ensures that teaching remains consistent, inclusive, and aligned with statutory guidance.

Assessment of RSE contributes to evaluation through teacher observation, pupil reflection, discussion, and self assessment activities that demonstrate understanding and personal development.

The contribution of visitors and external agencies is monitored and evaluated by the PSHE/RSE Lead to ensure that all input supports the school's ethos, safeguarding protocols, and curriculum aims. Feedback is gathered from staff and pupils following sessions to inform future planning.

Pupil voice is influential in adapting and amending planned learning activities. Feedback from pupils is collected through surveys, circle-time discussions, and school council meetings to ensure that RSE remains relevant, age appropriate, and responsive to pupils' needs.

14. Policy review

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, parents and governors.

It is reviewed annually to ensure continued alignment with statutory guidance and Kapow updates. It will be reviewed by the PSHE Lead, Headteacher, and Governing Body to ensure that the policy remains compliant with statutory guidance and reflects current best practice.

Updates are informed by changes to national guidance, curriculum developments, and feedback gathered through monitoring and evaluation. Feedback from pupils and parents is used to inform annual updates to the RSE curriculum, ensuring it remains relevant, inclusive, and responsive to the school community.

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The PSHE Lead oversees the review process and presents recommendations to the headteacher and governing body for approval. The updated policy is then shared with staff and published on the school website.