

*Learning, to make a difference, in
God's world*

Pilgrims' Cross CE Aided Primary School



RSE & PSHE Policy 2026-2027

Date Agreed: 23rd January 2026

Review Date: January 2027

Revision record

Revision No.	Date Issued	Prepared By	Approved	Comments
1	June 2026	JC	FGB, parent/ carers, Dioceses	New policy

Relationships Education/Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Purpose of the RSE policy

The purpose of this policy is to act as a central reference point to inform school staff, parents/carers, health professionals and visiting speakers of the school's approach to RSE within PSHE.

Context

Key documents which have informed this policy include:

The DfE guidance, 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' was issued by the Department of Education (DFE) under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and section 403 of the Education Act 1996 in July 2025. This guidance sets out legal duties with which schools must comply when teaching relationships education, RSE and health education.

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make relationships education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and relationships and sex education compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. They also make health education compulsory in all schools except independent schools.

The Church of England Vision for Education – 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good'; Autumn 2016 states that church schools must be committed to being welcoming and inclusive communities where all feel included, can learn and flourish, living out Jesus's promise of 'life in all its fullness' (John 10;10), regardless of their family arrangements, beliefs or sexual or gender orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination and harassment. It places a duty on educational facilities to be proactive in considering the need to address inequalities.

Flourishing for All, updated April 2025, published by the Church of England's education Office; July 2024, seeks to offer guidance for Church of England Schools to tackle and

prevent bullying. This document has four sections exploring the prevention of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, race-based bullying, faith-based and belief bullying and of those with special educational needs or disabilities.

The Church of England's Education Office publication, 'RSHE Principles and Charter' – This document explores the pastoral principles in more depth and how they relate to delivery of RSE in schools.

Consultation process

This policy was shared with parents/carers staff and governors for consultation in Summer 2026

- Pupils: RSE is taught within PSHE through the *Kapow* scheme.
- Parents/Carers: Curriculum letters to parents.
- Staff and Governors: training; discussion at meetings; working party; audit of RSE and Policy.

Definition of RSE

RSE stands for Relationships and Sex Education and sits within PSHE- Personal, Social, Health Education. RSE is part of lifelong learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It aims to give pupils essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and to stay safe on and offline. It enables exploration of attitudes and values, helps build self-esteem and confidence to view their sexuality positively (see [PSHE Association](#)). The RSE curriculum is taught in years 4,5 and 6.

The role of each school is to deliver RSE in accordance with the Education Act. The delivery of RSE in our Diocesan schools should encompass the teachings of the Church of England, including the traditional Christian understanding of marriage as the context for sexual relationships and the importance of trust, loyalty, fidelity and choice, as well as the understanding of abstinence and celibacy as positive life choices.

'Schools with a religious character may teach the distinctive faith perspective on relationships, and balanced debate may take place about issues that are seen as contentious.' RSE DfE Guidance paragraph 74

Roles and responsibilities in school

The member of staff responsible for the co-ordination, development, monitoring and evaluation of RSE is Jim Cascarini (Headteacher).

Staff continuing professional development

Staff development is supported at Pilgrims' Cross for the teaching of RSE through PSHE lessons. Staff meetings are delivered as well as other meetings that support the well-being of staff and pupils. Teachers are provided with support and guidance from the school by the Headteacher.

RSE and Safeguarding

At Pilgrims' Cross Primary School, we believe that our pupils should be kept safe from harm through safeguarding procedures and educating every pupil about how to care for their bodies and protect themselves from physical and emotional harm. RSE lessons are part of our planned PSHE programme. These support our duty to safeguard pupils.

The lessons enable pupils to:

- Know their rights to be protected and kept safe by setting and respecting personal boundaries
- Understand potential dangers they could face, including recognising unsafe online and offline relationships
- Be encouraged to adopt safe and responsible practices and deal sensibly with risk
- Develop personal skills to protect themselves and others from unsafe influences and physical and emotional harm
- Know when and who to ask for help when something feels wrong

Particular issues covered include:

- Bullying, including cyber bullying (by text message, on social networking sites, and so on) and prejudice-based bullying (also in Computing)
- Sexting
- Racist, disability, and homophobic and transphobic abuse
- Radicalisation and extremist behavior
- Substance misuse
- Issues that may be specific to local area or population, for example, gang activity and youth violence

We have a duty to report concerns about pupils who we feel are at risk of harm or when we suspect that FGM has already been performed (see **Appendix 1**).

The Church's Pastoral Advisory Group has recently developed the following principles as the basis for all good practice. These principles can be used as a resource to inform and shape the way that we all relate to one another and the care we offer to LGBT people and others who find themselves excluded from our communities:

- Acknowledge prejudice
- Speak into silence
- Address ignorance
- Cast out fear
- Admit hypocrisy
- Pay attention to power

Confidentiality

Staff working with pupils cannot offer unconditional or absolute confidentiality. Staff have an obligation to pass the information on to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Jim Cascarini and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL) Rossanna Hutchison & Rebecca Hathaway, if what is disclosed indicates that a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff in the

classroom establish boundaries where pupils feel safe and respected whilst protecting privacy. This is linked to learning about 'safe secrets' and 'unsafe secrets' in PSHE. Pupils are reminded during lessons that if they divulge anything that indicates that they may be at risk from harm then this information has to be passed on. Staff use 'distancing techniques' to enable pupils to explore issues without talking about personal experiences, for example, using case studies and scenarios.

In one-to-one situations, a member of staff will remind the pupil that they may not be able to keep some information confidential (e.g. if they think that the pupil is at risk of harm or abuse).

Visiting speakers, when working in the classroom, are bound by the same conditions and must pass on any information they feel needs responding to via the member of staff present.

Any cases of concern should be discussed with the child protection lead (DSL) of the school.

Worry Boxes

All our classrooms have worry boxes. These were agreed and actioned by the School Council, as a way of helping pupils pass on concerns/worries in a subtle way.

Teaching staff outline with their pupils how the Worry Boxes are to be used:

- Checked once a week by class teachers and addressed in appropriate ways (1:1 conversation, whole class discussion, etc.)
- Child & Family Support Worker is also happy to support/give pastoral advice but please do not just pass worries on to her to solve!
- Worries to be addressed by class teachers, however serious concerns to be passed on to/run past DSLs by adding on to CPOMS under "voice of the child" tag.
- Teachers cannot promise unconditional or absolute confidentiality. Staff have an obligation to pass the information on to the school's DSL/DDSLs, if what is disclosed indicates that a pupil is at risk of harm.

Working with parents and carers

Parents and carers have an especially important role to play in RSE at Pilgrims' Cross. They have been involved in the consultation process in the development of this policy, and the school informs and works with parents in the following ways:

- Curriculum meetings - for parents to discuss
- Before RSE lessons in years 4, 5 & 6, a letter to parents/carers is sent out describing the RSE their children will cover. In this way, parents/carers can be prepared to answer questions at home.
- Meetings set up for parents to discuss any issues.

Section 405 of the Education Act 1996 enables parents to withdraw their children from the parts of RSE which are not in the Science National Curriculum. This means all children must

learn about
biological aspects of human growth and reproduction and the spread of viruses

If parents approach the school to withdraw their child from the non-statutory parts of the RSE curriculum, they will be shown the RSE policy and informed what the National Curriculum content is and what curriculum content their child can be withdrawn from. (See **Appendix 2**: Science National Curriculum, RSE briefing). The 2025 RSE guidance makes it clear that children need to be explicitly taught the scientific names for body parts.

If the parents still decide to withdraw their child from the non-statutory parts of the RSE curriculum, then other arrangements will be agreed and made for them during this time. Parents should be made aware that there may be impromptu discussion in the classroom at other times. Parents must complete the form: Withdrawal from Sex Education within RSE, **Appendix 3**).

Relationships and sex education within PSHE

RSE within PSHE is developmental and appropriate to the age and stage of each pupil. It is part of a planned programme, taught in a safe and supportive atmosphere. The aim is for all pupils to feel comfortable to engage in open discussion and feel confident to ask questions/for help if needed, by:

- Establishing a safe and supportive environment
- Boundaries for discussion and confidentiality are discussed before the lessons begin.
- Each class/group establishes its own ground rules, explaining how they would like everyone to behave in order to learn.
- Distancing techniques (e.g. role play, third person case studies and an anonymous question box) are used when teaching sensitive issues.

This is supported by using good practice in teaching and learning, including:

- Using the correct terminology to make it clear that everybody uses common words and avoids prejudiced or offensive language. Teachers are guided and supported with the appropriate terminology by the PSHE scheme.
- Lessons contain a variety of teaching methods and strategies that encourages interaction, involvement and questioning: working individually, in pairs and groups; discussions; role play; prioritising; quizzes; research; case studies; games; circle time.

Inclusion

All children and young people, whatever their experience, background or identity are entitled to good quality RSE that helps them build a positive sense of self. Respect for themselves and each other is central to all teaching. The RSE programme and approach is inclusive of difference: gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, disability, ethnicity, culture, age, faith or belief or any other life experience.

RSE lessons help pupils to explore discrimination, prejudice, bullying; aggressive behaviour and other unhealthy relationships.

Teachers of RSE agree to work within the school's framework for RSE as described in this policy. Teachers' personal beliefs, values and attitudes will not affect their teaching of RSE.

Things to consider:

- Staff approach RSE sensitively, as pupils are all different, with different types of family.
- Staff encourage boys and girls to explore topics from different gender viewpoints and never assume that intimate relationships are between opposite sexes.
- RSE caters for all pupils and teachers and teaching materials are respectful of the rights of pupils with disabilities and how pupils choose to identify themselves.

The PSHE & RSE Curriculum

Relationship teaching and learning is embedded in daily practice (through our school values such as respecting ourselves and others). The *Kapow* PSHE curriculum (see **Appendix 4**) is organised as follows:

- PSHE is explicitly taught in all years (either a weekly 30 min slot or one-hour fortnightly). This is delivered through a comprehensive PSHE programme and also includes circle time and responding to needs arising within the class.
- Sex and Relationship Education is taught in mixed sex groups and single sex when thought appropriate (e.g. in year 5, menstruation for girls and wet dreams for boys).
- A 'Question Box' can be used to enable pupils to ask confidential questions on pieces of paper, which the teacher uses at the end of the programme (years 5 and 6).
- Teachers consider the age and maturity of the pupils when answering questions and how they relate to the intended learning for the class.
- There are options on how to answer a question (e.g. answer to whole class, individual child after the lesson, refer the question to be answered at home).
- Teachers need to ensure children understand that some issues may not be kept in confidence if the child is at risk.
- Teachers need to be mindful of the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Evidence of learning is captured through floor books, pupil voice, quotes, pictures/drawings and group work.

RSE is best taught by confident teachers as part of an ongoing PSHE curriculum. Visiting speakers can offer a different perspective and reinforce the teaching within the classroom and could include:

- School nursing team,
- Police Community Support Officers,
- Police - Internet Safety,

- NSPCC - Staying Safe,
- Local Community Partnership organisations.

Visiting speakers are briefed by the appropriate member of staff about the level of pupil awareness; ground rules of the class; the context/purpose of the visit and what pupils know and what they need to know. Visiting speakers are given a summary of the school RSE policy, together with the RSE curriculum, which they are expected to follow.

Assessment

Lessons are planned starting with establishing what pupils already know. In this way, teachers can also address any misconceptions that pupils may have. We establish what pupils already know through:

- Brainstorms, mind-maps and discussions
- Draw and write activities to find out what pupils already know
- Continuums/diamond nine and other activities to find out what pupils' feel is important to them.

Assessment is the process where each pupil's learning and achievement are measured against the lesson objectives. We assess pupil progress assessed through:

- Pupil reflection at the end of each topic to enable them to express their own learning, progress and next steps
- Written or oral tasks
- Quizzes
- Pupil self-evaluation
- One-to-one discussion

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring is to ensure teaching is in line with school policy and that pupils are taught what is planned for different year groups. Evaluation helps to plan future lessons and enables teachers to review the programme to improve the teaching and learning. Governors and senior leaders oversee the PSHE coordinator in their responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of RSE and methods used can include:

- Feedback on lessons
- Teachers completing end of topic evaluations
- PSHE floor book looks
- Annual PSHE review of Action Plan
- Resources, including the whole primary school curriculum for RSE (Appendix 4) and the PSHE Association/Sex Education Forum

Appendix 1: Definition of FGM

"Female Genital mutilation (FGM) comprises of all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or therapeutic reasons."

World Health Organisation 1997

"Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. "

Department for Education: Keeping Children Safe in Education April 2019

FGM is considered child abuse in the UK and a grave violation of the human rights of girls and women. It is a violation of the child's right to life and their bodily integrity as well as their right to health. It is illegal in the UK to allow girls to undergo female genital mutilation either in this country or abroad. People guilty of allowing FGM to take place can be punished by fines or up to 14 years in prison.

Female Genital Mutilation occurs mainly in Africa and to a lesser extent in the Middle East and Asia. It is not a religious requirement and there are no health benefits. It is a cultural practice.

Communities particularly affected in the UK include girls from: Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea, Yemen, Pakistan, Indonesia and Afghanistan; particularly first generation immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

This procedure often takes place in the summer, using the school holidays to recover (recovery takes 6-9 weeks.) It is important to be alert when a girl from a high risk group is absent from school for a long period or when a family request an 'authorised absence' just before a school holiday.

Children might also be talking about a special ceremony or a special holiday abroad.

Signs that FGM may have taken place include:

- difficulty walking, standing or sitting
- spending much longer times in the toilets
- usual behaviour after a long absence
- not wanting to participate in PE or other physical play/activities
- acutely painful menstrual cycles
- asking for help or being anxious but not able to be explicit due to embarrassment or fear

All schools should keep their pupils safe from harm through safeguarding procedures and educating every pupil about their responsibility to care for their bodies and protect themselves from physical and emotional harm. They have a duty to report concerns about girls at risk from FGM or when they know that FGM might already have been performed.

Lessons in PSHE and RSE can give pupils information, learn personal and life skills and explore attitudes and values around protecting themselves and others from abuse, including FGM.

NSPCC FGM helpline: 0800 028 3550

help@nspcc.org.uk

Appendix 2: Joint briefing by the Association of Science Education and the PSHE Association

This briefing is focused on the content of the Science National Curriculum for maintained schools. The briefing provides guidance to schools about their statutory duties to ensure that all children learn about puberty.

Teaching about puberty before children experience it is essential to ensure that pupils' physical, emotional and learning needs are met and that they have the correct information about how to take care of their bodies and keep themselves safe. Teaching about puberty is also considered a key safeguarding issue by OFSTED. As Janet Palmer HMI (OFSTED's PSHE lead) has said:

"If pupils are kept ignorant of their human, physical and sexual rights... they are not being adequately safeguarded. When inspecting schools ... inspectors are guided to check that the sex education in national curriculum science at Key Stages 1-3 is being adequately taught; and that primary schools have regard to the Department for Education statutory guidance on teaching pupils about puberty before they experience the onset of physical changes."

"Inspectors leading Section 5 inspections have been guided to grade behaviour and safety separately and to take whichever is the lowest grade as the overall grade for the Behaviour and Safety strand of the Section 5 inspection framework; and if Behaviour and Safety are judged to require improvement this is likely to affect the grade for overall effectiveness."

In order to keep pupils safe, it is vital that they learn about puberty before it happens. NHS advice states that puberty can begin as early as 8 for girls and 9 for boys. Year 5 is therefore the latest time in the school curriculum when this should be addressed. The National Curriculum clearly states that subjects can be taught earlier than the recommended school years set out in the framework.

The dividing line between teaching about the growth and development of humans as part of the National Curriculum for Science, and Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) as part of a PSHE programme, is sometimes misinterpreted. For clarity, teaching about the changes experienced during puberty is part of the National Science Curriculum and all pupils in maintained schools must therefore be able to access this learning; this learning can then be built upon in SRE. Section 405 of the Education Act 1996 sets out the right of parents to withdraw their children from SRE but explicitly states that this right only applies to those topics which fall outside the National Curriculum.

The 2014 National Curriculum is clear that teaching about puberty is an integral part of the Programmes of Study for Science at Key Stage 2, with the Year 5 Programme of Study stipulating that it is a statutory requirement that:

"Pupils should be taught to describe the changes as humans develop to old age"

This must include teaching about puberty, which is a principle change for humans as they develop and grow older. This is supported by the statutory guidance referred to by Janet Palmer and the non-statutory National Curriculum guidance for the Year 5 Programme of Study for Science which states:

"Pupils should draw a timeline to indicate the stages in the growth and development of humans. They should learn about the changes experienced in puberty."

It is clear, therefore, that schools should teach about puberty in either Year 4 or Year 5 depending on the needs of their pupils. A high-quality science curriculum including learning about puberty will ensure that pupils get the learning they need. Parental right to withdraw children from this part of the school curriculum does not fall within this remit.

Appendix 3: Parent form: Withdrawal from Sex Education within RSE

Withdrawal from sex education within RSE at Pilgrims' Cross Primary School	
TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS	
Name of child	
Class	
Name of parent	
Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education:	
Any other information you would like the school to consider	
Parent signature	
TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	
Include notes from discussions with parents and agreed actions taken.	Signed: Dated:

Appendix 4: PSHE & RSHE overview

Unit Overviews September 2026

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 1	Families and Relationships (7)	Health and Wellbeing (8)	Health and Wellbeing (8)/ Safety and the changing body (8)	Safety and the changing body (8)/ Citizenship (6)	Citizenship (6)/Economic Wellbeing (6)	Economic Wellbeing (6)
Year 2	Intro of rules/ Families and <u>relationships</u> (7)	Families and <u>relationships</u> (7)/ Health and Wellbeing (7)	Health and Wellbeing (7)/ Safety and the changing (9)	Safety and the changing (9)/ Citizenship (7)	Citizenship (7)	Economic Wellbeing (6) Transition (1)
Year 3	Introduction: rules of PSHE / families and relationships	Families and relationships /health and wellbeing	Health and wellbeing/ safety and the changing body	Safety and the changing body/citizenship	Citizenship / economic wellbeing	Economic wellbeing/ transition
Year 4	Introduction rules of PSHE/families and relationships	Families and relationships /health and wellbeing	Health and wellbeing/ citizenship	citizenship/ economic wellbeing	economic wellbeing/ safety and the changing body	safety and the changing body/ transition
Year 5/6	Families & Relationships	Health & Wellbeing	Citizenship	Economic Wellbeing	Safety & the Changing Body	Transition

Sex and Relationships Education objectives

Year 4 Safety and the changing body/ transition

- I can understand that I have changed physically and have developed skills in my life so far.
- I can identify some physical changes I will go through before I become an adult.
- I can identify things that I will be able to do as an adult that I cannot do now.
- I understand that my body will change as I become an adult.
- I understand that different changes happen to males and females.
- I can identify some physical differences between a child and an adult.
- I can explain ways to look after my personal hygiene.

Year 5 Safety and the changing body - puberty

- I can understand how the body changes as a child becomes an adult.
- I can accurately label sexual external parts of the body.
- I can accurately label internal reproductive organs.
- I understand the process of the menstrual cycle.
- I can explain some changes I will go through during puberty.
- I know who I can go to for help if I need to.
- Understand that puberty may change my feelings as well as my body.
- I understand that everyone is different and these differences are normal.

- I know who I can talk to if I'm worried about anything.

Year 6 Safety and the changing body - conception

- I can explain what happens in the menstrual cycle.
- I can sequence the steps involved in how a baby is conceived.
- I can describe how a baby develops in the womb during pregnancy.
- I can identify some of the things a baby needs.