THE WREN
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Relationships and Sex Education Policy

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with our current regulations.

Reviewed and approved by:	Caroline Mackay
Date of next review:	March 2027

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1. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place.
- Prepare students for puberty and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene.
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy, and cultivate positive characteristics such as kindness and integrity.
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality, health and relationships.
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- Promote the development of our students' understanding, positive attitudes and skills in their physical, moral, and emotional development.

2. Statutory requirements

As a secondary academy, we must provide RSE to all students under section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

In teaching RSE, we're required by our funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state, as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 404 to 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

At The Wren, we teach RSE as part of our PSHE (Culture) lessons as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students and families. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – the Assistant Vice Principal and Head of Personal Development, audited the whole school curriculum to map against the National Curriculum RSE requirements in order to:
    - highlight where PSHE/RSE was already in place
    - quality assure the standard of provision

- identify areas/ topics lacking
- sequence where and when subjects should be covered as appropriate to the cultural and diverse nature of the community. March 2026

2. Student consultation – we investigated what exactly students want from their RSE using student voice. January 2026.
3. Further review, clarification and ratification – the school will review this policy annually.

As part of the review process, the school will seek the views of staff, students, families and governors. Feedback will be considered when making any amendments to the policy.

4. Definition

For the purpose of this policy:

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

5. Curriculum

The Wren's RSE curriculum reflects the diverse cultural, religious and family backgrounds represented within our community. Teaching promotes mutual respect, tolerance and understanding, while ensuring that all statutory requirements are met. Students are encouraged to explore different viewpoints respectfully and to understand the rights and responsibilities that exist within a diverse democratic society.

We have developed the curriculum, considering the age, developmental stage, needs and feelings of our students. If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, staff will respond in an appropriate manner so that students are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

Families may request information about the content of the RSE curriculum and examples of teaching resources. The school will make reasonable arrangements at our annual Year Ahead meetings for families to view materials where appropriate and permissible under copyright and licensing arrangements.

Our RSE curriculum is set out as per Appendices 1 and 2, but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

6. Delivery of RSE

RSE is delivered primarily through the students' Culture lessons and their assemblies, and forms part of the core curriculum for all year groups. The school reserves the right to invite external companies or speakers to the school to deliver subject content; where this is organised, the company will be accredited to a recognised agency. Relevant in-service training of staff to support the facilitation of RSE curriculum delivery is to be updated at the least annually, including their knowledge of key frameworks. This is enhanced by student opportunities to learn about relationships and sexual relationships across the curriculum, particularly in Science, Humanities, RS, English and Drama. Our tutor programme may also focus on some of the values that drive this policy.

Students may also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional throughout their time at The Wren.

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media safety and awareness
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

RSE complements several other curriculum subjects. Where appropriate, the school will look for opportunities to make links between the subjects and integrate teaching. The RSE curriculum will be delivered by appropriately trained members of staff.

We will make sure that students understand the importance of equality and respect and learn about the law relating to the protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, by the end of their secondary education. The curriculum is designed to focus on students of all gender identities and expressions, and activities will be planned to make sure all are actively involved.

Throughout each year group we will use appropriate material to assist learning, such as:

- Diagrams
- Videos
- Books
- Games
- Discussions and practical activities

Staff will make sure that all students' views are listened to and will encourage them to ask questions and engage in discussion. Staff will answer questions sensitively, honestly, and appropriately for the age of the students.

The curriculum will be designed to be relevant and accessible to all students regardless of sex, gender reassignment, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or other protected characteristics.

The Wren will make sure that all teaching and materials are appropriate for the ages and needs of the students, including any additional needs, such as special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The school will consult families when developing and reviewing the RSE policy. Information about the RSE curriculum will be made available to families and opportunities will be provided for families to ask questions and understand the content being taught. Decisions about curriculum content and delivery remain the responsibility of the school.

It is important for students to know what the law says about certain topics covered in RSE, particularly in relation to the law and young people. This helps students identify what is right and wrong and can provide a foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion. These topics include, but are not limited to:

- Marriage, including forced marriage and civil partnerships
- Consent, including the age of consent
- Domestic abuse, stalking, rape, sexual offences, female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation, including public sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour
- Online behaviours, including image and information sharing (including sexual imagery, youth-produced sexual imagery and AI-generated sexual imagery and deepfakes). Students should understand the law about online sexual harassment and online sexual abuse, including grooming and sextortion
- Pornography
- Abortion
- The protected characteristics
- The age of criminal responsibility

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (i.e. families can include single-parent families, same-sex parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive

parents and foster parents among other structures), along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, looked-after children, young carers or kinship carers).

Across our school, we will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property or hate crime.

6.1. Inclusivity

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of students will relate to them
- Is sensitive to all students' experiences
- During lessons, makes students feel:
    - Safe and supported
    - Able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

- Make sure that students learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in:
    - A whole-class setting
    - Small groups or targeted sessions
    - 1-to-1 discussions
    - Digital formats
- Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

6.2. Use of resources

We will consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support students in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age and maturity of the students
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to students' experiences and won't provoke distress

7. Use of external organisations and materials

We will make sure that an agency and any materials used are accurate, age and stage appropriate and unbiased and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

We **will**:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use:
    - Are age-appropriate
    - Are in line with students' developmental stage
    - Comply with:
        - This policy
        - The Teachers' Standards
        - The Equality Act 2010
        - The Human Rights Act 1998
        - The Education Act 1996
- Only work with external agencies where we have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses
- Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum
- Review any case-study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with
- Be clear on:
    - What they're going to say
    - Their position on the issues to be discussed
- Ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use
- Know the named individuals who will be there, and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for these people
- Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to us, or to families
- Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session
- Remind staff that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session
- Make sure that the staff is in the room during any sessions with external speakers
- Inform all external organisations that the school is legally obliged to share all content with families
- Share all external materials with families

We **won't**, under any circumstances:

- Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions
- Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme
- Work with agencies who don't allow their material to be shared with families

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1. The Local Academy Committee

The local academy committee will approve the RSE policy and hold the Principal to account for its implementation.

8.2. The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring the Head of Personal Development will make sure that RSE is taught consistently across the school, for sharing all resources and materials with families, and for managing requests to withdraw students from non-statutory/non-science components of RSE (see section 9).

8.3. Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a way that is sensitive, high-quality and appropriate for each year group
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Responding appropriately to students whose families wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSE in line with the policy (section 9)
- Modelling positive behaviour and avoiding language that might perpetuate harmful stereotypes, and being conscious of everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and stereotypes
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that students may make as a result of the subject content to the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) Sarah Mollen.

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Principal.

The member of the Senior Leadership Team with overall responsibility for RSE is the Assistant Vice Principal – Belonging.

8.4. Students

Students are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

9. Families' right to withdraw

Families have the right to request to withdraw their child from RSE lessons which expose content to students from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education: 'Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health', up to and until 3 terms before the student turns 16. After this point, if the student wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

DfE guidance is clear that parents can only withdraw their children from elements of 'Sex Education' curriculum, not 'Relationship Education' so, for any teaching that the school considers falls within relationships or health education, the parental right to withdraw does not apply.

Families must write to the Principal requesting permission to withdraw their child from RSE lessons jsalberg@wren.excalibur.org.uk. Before granting any request for withdrawal, the Head of Personal Development will discuss the request with families and, where appropriate, the student, to ensure that families understand the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

For those students who are withdrawn from RSE lessons, alternative provision will be provided and will be in line with the school's PSHE (Culture) curriculum.

10. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

External providers will be subject to appropriate due diligence and quality assurance processes to ensure that content is accurate, balanced, age appropriate and aligned with statutory guidance and the school's values.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Assistant Vice Principal - Belonging through:

- Reviewing the policy annually with the Head of Personal Development
- Ensuring that RSE is covered in the schemes of work for Culture
- Monitoring the use of teaching and learning styles through DDI's and BNSiA
- Monitoring the use of teaching materials through work scrutiny
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the school's programme

- Ensuring the content is age appropriate
- Ensuring there are opportunities for both family and student voice to evaluate the curriculum

We also recognise the importance of a strong partnership between families and schools which includes transparency regarding curriculum content and materials.

The school will monitor:

- curriculum coverage against statutory requirements;
- quality of teaching and learning;
- student knowledge and understanding;
- safeguarding themes emerging through RSE;
- stakeholder feedback from students, staff and families.

Students' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems. This policy will be reviewed by the Assistant Vice Principal - Belonging annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the local Academy Committee and the school Principal.

Appendix 1: Relationships and sex education curriculum map

Year group	Topic/theme details
7	Transition, friendships, online safety, puberty
8	Respectful relationships, stereotypes, consent foundations
9	Healthy relationships, exploitation, pornography, sexual harassment
10	Sexual health, contraception, consent, coercive control
11	Intimate relationships, healthy choices, accessing support
12	Adult relationships, university/workplace relationships, sexual health, independence
13	Adult relationships, university/workplace relationships, sexual health, independence

The school will determine when and how these topics are taught based on the age, maturity and needs of students. Not all content will necessarily be delivered in every year group.

Appendix 2: By the end of secondary school students should know

Topic	STUDENTs should know
Families	• That there are different types of committed, stable relationships • How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children • Why marriage or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples. The legal status of marriage and civil partnership, including that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections that are not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have, for example, undergone a non-legally binding religious ceremony • That 'common-law marriage' is a myth, and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children • That forced marriage and marriage before the age of 18 are illegal • How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships. • The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting 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, including when students are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust
Respectful relationships, including friendships	• About the characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, students should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, generosity, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships • How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers. Students should understand the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and equal

	• The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others. This includes developing one's own interests, hobbies, friendship groups, and skills. Students should understand what it means to be treated with respect by others • What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs • The practical steps students can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships. This includes skills for communicating respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict • The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help • Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration • The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Students should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care and attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Students should understand that just because someone says 'yes' to doing something that doesn't automatically make it ethically okay • How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). Students should be equipped to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice • How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships. For example, how people who are disempowered can feel they are not entitled to be treated with respect by others or how those who enjoy an unequal amount of power might, with or without realising it, impose their preferences on others • How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviours and by disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing some people with a sense of sexual entitlement to the bodies of others

	• How some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called 'involuntary celibates' (incels) or online influencers
Online safety and awareness	• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online • About online risks, including that any material they provide provides to another has the potential to be shared and circulated online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online. They should also understand the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues • Not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal material which is sent to them. Students should understand that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has happened there is no way of controlling where it ends up. Students should understand the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images • About the characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and/or may post things which aren't real or have been created with AI. They should also know that social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online • That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime (even if the photo is of themselves or someone who has consented, and even if the photo was created by that child and/or using AI). That there are potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating these images. That sharing indecent images of people over 18 without their consent is also a crime • How to seek support. They should also understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either at school or with the police, if an image of themselves has been shared • What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including personal information, images or videos, and how to manage issues online

	• About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them • That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons • Where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Students should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamourise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong • That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice • How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns • That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours and can negatively affect how people behave towards sexual partners. That this can affect people who see pornographic content accidentally, as well as those who see it deliberately. That pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it • How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online • That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (for example, to enable targeted advertising) • That criminals can operate online scams, such as using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion

	• That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and that these can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice. That it is important to be able to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how they might pose a risk
Being safe	• How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships (in all contexts, including online) and early sexual relationships that might involve kissing or touching. That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent • That there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from peers or others, including sexual pressure, and how to avoid putting pressure on others • How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe (and recognise this in the relationships of others); how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others if needed • How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. About ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. That there are strategies they can use to increase their safety, and that this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour. About the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and they should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions • What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it • That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language, attention or touching, taking and/or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting • About concepts and laws relating to: ○ Sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault

	○ Harmful sexual behaviour, which includes all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people but also includes other forms of concerning behaviour like using age-inappropriate sexual language ○ Domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour ○ Harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation ○ Forced marriage ○ Female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty • That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed • That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury • That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone's neck or covering someone's mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death • That pornography presents some activities as normal which many people do not and will never engage in, some of which can be emotionally and/or physically harmful • How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour, or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced from others, including information on where to report abuse and where to seek medical attention when required, for example after an assault
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	• That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive • The law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex

	• About sexual consent and their capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given, as well as the considerations that people might take into account prior to sexual activity, such as the law, their faith and family values. That kindness and care for others require more than just consent • That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing • That some sexual behaviours can be harmful • The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, and signposting towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decision making • That there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Students should be given medically and legally accurate and impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help • How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted. How risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) • About the use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post exposure prophylaxis (PEP), and how and where to access them. The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma • About the prevalence of STIs, the short and long-term impact they can have on those who contract them, and key facts about treatment • How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour • How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms • How to counter misinformation, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further advice, and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment