



4 - 18 yrs Co-educational Independent Day School

# Relationships and Sex Education Policy – Senior School

**Approved by:** Laura Sweetman, Head of  
School

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**Review Period:** Annually

**Next Review Due:** September 2026

# Relationships and Sex Education Policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our school's policy on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is based on the requirements of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (Part 1, paragraph 2A), and the DfE document 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education' Statutory Guidance (July 2025, statutory from September 2026).
- 1.2 The DfE statutory guidance document '**Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers**' was reissued in July 2025 and becomes statutory from September 2026. This document clearly sets out the curriculum content that secondary schools must deliver on RSE and Health Education. This document contains information on what schools should do and sets out the legal duties with which schools must comply when teaching Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. Unless otherwise specified, 'school' means all schools, whether maintained, non-maintained or independent schools, including academies and free schools, non-maintained special schools, maintained special schools and alternative provision, including pupil referral units. This policy also has due regard to the ISI Inspection Framework (September 2025), Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025, the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015), and the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.3 In the DfE document, RSE is defined as 'learning about physical, moral and emotional development'. The guidance states, 'It is about understanding the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health'.
- 1.4 The purpose of this policy is to set out the ways in which the school's provision for sex and relationships education will support pupils through their spiritual, moral, social, emotional and physical development, and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

Our RSE programme seeks to:

- be age appropriate and differentiated to the needs of the pupils including SEN, autistic, visually impaired pupils and any other disabilities that require a bespoke curriculum;
- present information in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner;
- encourage the development of social skills and strategies, which will reduce the risk of exploitation, misunderstanding and abuse;
- be fully **inclusive of all genders, sexual orientations and all types of families (LGBT inclusive)**;
- develop a clear understanding of the importance of **consent**; how to give, withdraw, ask for and recognise consent;
- reinforce the importance of **loving relationships**, rooted in **mutual respect**;
- explore the skills needed for **effective parenting** and how to assess one's readiness to be a parent;
- to represent all types of families and to explore the different methods for starting a family;
- to ensure that BAME, LGBT and people with disabilities are positively represented in our curriculum;
- ensure pupils can identify the qualities of **healthy and unhealthy relationships**;
- allow pupils to examine the physical and emotional implications of sexual behaviour and to explore the arguments for **delaying sexual activity**;
- make pupils aware how and where to **seek help** if they are in an unhealthy or abusive relationship or experience sexual harassment;
- prepare pupils for the journey from **adolescence to adulthood**;

- provide pupils with a safe environment to learn about **sexual orientation and gender identity**, reinforcing the importance of mutual respect and tackling LGBT misconceptions, homophobia, transphobia, bi-phobia and gender stereotypes;
- ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of **sexual and reproductive biology**, including knowledge of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases;
- ensure pupils understand the different risks associated with various types of sexual activity and understand how to engage **in safe sexual activity** by exploring a range of **contraception**;
- place paramount importance on online safety and the risks of using social media and the internet for sexual purposes;
- Develop pupils' understanding of the dangerous of pornographic material.
- Ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of **child on child abuse**, including what it looks like, who might be at risk and where to seek help

### 3. Context

Relationships and sex education (RSE) is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It should equip children and young people with the information, skills and positive values to have safe, fulfilling relationships, to enjoy their sexuality and to take responsibility for their sexual health and wellbeing.

RSE is **not** about encouraging teenagers to become sexually active nor is it about promoting any particular lifestyle or relationship choice. RSE is about providing pupils with the knowledge, skills and confidence to make safe, healthy and informed relationship choices as young people and in the future as adults.

High quality relationships and sex education helps create safe school communities in which pupils can grow, learn and develop positive, healthy behaviour for life. We teach RSE on the understanding that:

- it is taught in the context of family life;
- it is part of a wider process of social, personal, spiritual and moral education;
- children should be taught to have respect for their own bodies;
- children should learn about their responsibilities to others, and be aware of the consequences of sexual activity;
- it is important to build positive relationships with others, involving trust and respect, both in person and online;
- it makes a significant contribution to our duty to safeguard and protect all children;
- It plays a key role in improving health outcomes for children and young people such as reducing teenage pregnancy and risk taking behaviour.

3.2 Our RSE programme is one of the most important ways we act on our responsibility to safeguard and protect our children, as set out in our Safeguarding/Child Protection policy. We also refer to guidance from the government and expert organisations on specific safeguarding issues, which are relevant to our cohort of children, as listed in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. To safeguard children effectively it is vital that opportunities are created in the curriculum to teach about healthy behaviour, caring relationships, online safety and when and how to get help. At Arnold Lodge we encourage children to develop skills in these areas so that they are equipped with strategies to help themselves in preventing or reporting harm or abuse.

In line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)*, paragraphs 128–132, the school recognises that effective preventative education through RSE is most effective in the context of a whole-school approach that creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny, misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence or harassment. The school ensures that the RSE programme is fully inclusive and developed to be age- and stage-appropriate, with particular attention to the needs of pupils with SEND, disabilities and other vulnerabilities. The school recognises that pupils with SEND may face additional vulnerabilities to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual

abuse, exploitation and bullying, and ensures that RSE teaching is tailored to address these risks appropriately (DfE RSE Statutory Guidance July 2025, paragraph 76).

The school's RSE curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure it addresses emerging online risks at an age-appropriate level. In line with the DfE RSE Statutory Guidance (July 2025, paragraph 63), this includes awareness of: the Online Safety Act and its implications for pupils; risks associated with AI-generated content and deepfakes, including AI-generated sexual imagery; sextortion and online sexual harassment; and the risks associated with vaping and nicotine products. The curriculum is responsive to emerging risks specific to the school's locality or the wider community.

3.3 In accordance with the principles of the Equality Act (2010), we believe that every child is entitled to receive RSE regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, age, cultural heritage, disability, sexuality, language needs or special educational needs. We use an inclusive, whole school approach to ensure RSE can be accessed in an age-appropriate way throughout a child's school career.

#### 4. Organisation and Content

4.1 We teach about relationships and sex education through different aspects of the curriculum. While we carry out the main RSE in our PSHEE curriculum, we also do some RSE through the statutory science curriculum and other subject areas, such as PE and ICT. We believe all these contribute significantly to children's knowledge and understanding of their own bodies, and how they are changing and developing.

4.2 In PSHEE, we use the Crea8ive programme of study for PSHEE to inform our curriculum which is in line with the 2020 RSE guidance, as well as based on guidance from the PSHE Association. We teach children about relationships, and we encourage children to discuss the changes that happen as they grow up. We teach about the parts of the body, including the private parts, inappropriate touching, why males and females are different, and we explain to the children what will happen to their bodies during puberty. We encourage the children to ask for help if they need it.

4.3 Under the science curriculum, teachers inform children about males and females and how a baby is born.

4.4 Our curriculum content will cover the required themes as set out in ***Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers:***

- Family
- Respectful relationships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health (see Appendix I for further details)

4.5 In Key Stage 3 RSE is taught through the PSHEE programme, which is delivered once a week. The focus is on healthy relationships, consent and body image, as well as looking at identity, contraception and STI's.

4.6 In Key Stage 4 and 5 RSE is taught through weekly PSHEE sessions as part of the mentor programme. Issues such as self-examination, fertility, parenting, pregnancy and the importance of communication and respect in a healthy relationship. This is closely linked to teaching on mental health and protective behaviours.

4.7 All pupils have information on reporting child on child abuse and where to seek help in the Pupil Information Booklet. Every mentor room noticeboard also has information on relevant helplines for

pupils, and weekly reminders are given in assemblies around safeguarding leads in school and the 'Whisper' function on the school website for reporting any concerns anonymously.

## **5 Safe and Effective Practice**

- 5.1 During Relationships & Sex Education lessons (and at other times) controversial topics may arise. The judgement of individual teachers will decide as to whether the subjects are suitable for class discussion. Teachers will try to answer pupils' questions honestly, sensitively and in such a way that takes the context into account. In all circumstances, the professional judgement of the teacher must come in to play.
- 5.2 If a question is felt to be too explicit, the teacher will acknowledge it and deal with it outside the whole class setting.
- 5.3 Teachers should establish a set of ground rules so that young people are aware of parameters.
- 5.4 Pupils should never be asked to disclose their sexual orientation or personal information about themselves or others.
- 5.5 Teachers and pupils will show respect for all genders, sexualities and different types of families.
- 5.6 Any concerns that arise about sexual abuse or any other safeguarding issues must be followed up under the school's safeguarding procedures.
- 5.7 Where discussions about sexual behaviour arise from apparently unrelated topics, teachers will give attention to relevant issues, again using professional judgement.
- 5.8 Teachers will take part in training led by an RSE specialist to ensure that teaching is up to date and that teachers are confident in addressing relevant issues. All staff who deliver RSE content receive subject-specific training on sensitive topics including consent, FGM, LGBT+ content, and responding to disclosures. Staff are also trained on adapting RSE delivery for pupils with SEND and EAL, including the use of visual supports, pre-teaching of vocabulary, and strategies for neurodiverse learners. The DfE teacher training modules on RSHE topics (referenced in KCSIE 2025, paragraph 131) are used to support staff competence. A log of RSE-specific CPD is maintained and made available for inspection purposes.

## **6 The role of parents**

- 6.1 The school is well aware that a significant role in children's RSE lies with parents and carers. We therefore wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school, through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. To promote this objective, we:
  - inform parents about the school's RSE policy and practice;
  - answer any questions that parents may have about the RSE of their child;
  - take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy, or about the arrangements for RSE in the school;
  - encourage parents to be involved in reviewing the school policy, and making modifications to it as necessary;
  - inform parents about the best practice known with regard to RSE, so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home;
  - make the RSE resources used in our lessons available for viewing;

- ensure parents are aware of the school's mandatory duty to protect children at risk of the illegal practice of FGM.

We believe that through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing bodies and their increasing responsibilities.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 2 of this policy and addressed to the Head of School. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The Head of school will discuss the request with parents/carers and take appropriate action. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

## **7 The role of other members of the community**

7.1 We encourage other valued members of the community to work with us to provide advice and support to the children with regard to health education. In particular, members of the local health authority, such as the school nurse and other health professionals, and our local community police officer, can give us valuable support with our RSE programme.

## **8 Confidentiality**

Teachers conduct RSE lessons in a sensitive manner, and in confidence. However, if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of any type of sexual abuse, including FGM the matter will be reported to the DSL as a matter of urgency. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will then deal with the matter in consultation with other social, health and education professionals, in accordance with statutory safeguarding procedures. Staff should be familiar with the specific procedures relating to the reporting of FGM (see our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy).

In a case where a teacher learns from an under 16 year old that they are having or contemplating sexual intercourse:

- the young person will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to parent/carer and if necessary to seek medical advice;
- child protection issues will be considered, and referred if necessary to the teacher responsible for Child Protection under the school's procedures. The young person will be properly counselled about contraception, including precise information about where young people can access contraception and advice services.

In any case where child protection procedures are followed, the teacher will ensure that the young person understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first.

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. Teachers are not legally bound to inform parents or the headteacher of any disclosure unless the headteacher has specifically requested them to do so.

Health professionals in school are bound by their codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual pupil, but in a classroom situation they must follow the school's confidentiality policy.

## **9 Inclusion**

*Ethnic and Cultural Groups*

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups. For some young people it is not culturally appropriate for them to be taught particular items in mixed groups. We will respond to parental requests and concerns.

### *Pupils with Special Needs*

Arnold Lodge is committed to ensuring that the RSE curriculum is accessible to all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice 2015, the Equality Act 2010, and DfE RSE Statutory Guidance (July 2025, paragraphs 75–77). We recognise that pupils with SEND may be more vulnerable to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual abuse, exploitation, violence and bullying (KCSIE 2025, paragraph 128). RSE can therefore be particularly important for these pupils, especially those with social, emotional and mental health needs or learning disabilities. To ensure accessibility, the school: pre-teaches key RSE vocabulary using visual supports and concrete resources; uses explicit, clear language rather than abstract or idiomatic expressions, particularly for neurodiverse pupils; provides additional processing time and opportunities for repetition; adapts assessment methods so that pupils with SEND can demonstrate their understanding appropriately; ensures the SENDCO reviews RSE planning and resources annually for accessibility; and considers how individual pupils' IEP or EHCP targets (for example, in social communication) may be supported through RSE learning outcomes. In accordance with the SEND Code of Practice 2015, section 7.38, the RSE curriculum supports the preparation of all pupils for adulthood.

### *Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation*

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate question and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them.

### ***Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL)***

Arnold Lodge recognises that RSE content carries a high linguistic demand, with specialist vocabulary relating to bodies, relationships, emotions, consent and sexual health. For pupils for whom English is an additional language, the school takes the following steps to ensure accessibility, in accordance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 6 paragraph 32(3)(b) and the ISI Inspection Framework (September 2025), paragraph 56: key RSE vocabulary is pre-taught with visual support, using images, diagrams and realia where appropriate; staff consider the cultural backgrounds of EAL pupils and their families, exercising particular sensitivity in the delivery of topics with significant cultural dimensions; parental communications about RSE content, including information about the right to request withdrawal from sex education, are made available in accessible formats and, where possible, supported by translation or interpretation for parents who may have limited English; and the EAL lead reviews RSE planning for linguistic accessibility, with differentiation calibrated to pupils' English language proficiency levels.

## **10 Engaging Stakeholders**

We aim to work in partnership with parents and carers to deliver a high quality RSE program. During the summer term we offer an information evening for parents and carers which covers all aspects of the RSE curriculum and welcome feedback in order to help us continually improve.

In accordance with ISSR Part 1 paragraph 2A(1)(f), the school consults parents of registered pupils before making or revising this policy. A record of parental consultation is maintained, including the dates and methods of consultation (such as information evenings, email communications and feedback forms), a summary of the views expressed, and an explanation of how parental feedback has been taken into account in shaping the policy and curriculum content. This policy is published on the school website and a copy is provided free of charge to anyone who requests one, in accordance with ISSR Part 1 paragraph 2A(1)(g).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; PSHEE and Citizenship Policy (Senior School); Anti-Bullying Policy; Behaviour Policy; Equal Opportunities Policy; SEND Policy; Accessibility Plan; Online Safety Policy; and DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025.

### **Appendix I**

#### **Extract from ‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory Guidance (July 2025)’**

By the end of Secondary School pupils should know:

Topic	Pupils should know:
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.</li><li>• How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.</li><li>• What marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to</li></ul>

	<p>couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.</li> <li>• The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.</li> <li>• The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.</li> <li>• How to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.</li> </ul>
<p>Respectful relationships, including friendships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship.</li> </ul> <p>practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice).</li> <li>• That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs.</li> <li>• About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.</li> <li>• That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.</li> <li>• What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.</li> <li>• The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.</li> </ul>
<p>Online and media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.</li> <li>• About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online.</li> <li>• Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them.</li> <li>• What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact of viewing harmful content.</li> <li>• That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners.</li> <li>• That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail.</li> <li>• How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online</li> </ul>
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships.</li> <li>• How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)</li> </ul>
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.</li> <li>• That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.</li> <li>• that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.</li> <li>• The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available.</li> <li>• The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage.</li> <li>• that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help).</li> <li>• How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing.</li> <li>• About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment. (could be health)</li> <li>• How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.</li> </ul>
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**Appendix 2: Parent/Carer form: withdrawal from Sex Education within RSE**

To be completed by parents/carers:			
Name of child:		Mentor:	
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: