





# Relationships and Sex Education Policy (SS-15)

<b>Ratified by Governors:</b>	Mr A Rankin, Chair of Safeguarding & Welfare Committee
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	May 2026

<b>Ratified by SLT:</b>	Mr S Milledge, Assistant Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	May 2026

<b>Committee Responsible:</b>	Safeguarding & Welfare Committee
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<b>Compliant with Equality Scheme:</b>	Yes
<b>Date of Review:</b>	June 2028
<b>Date to be Reviewed:</b>	Biannually – June 2028
<b>Version Number:</b>	05

Version	Date	Comments	Author
02	17.12.2019	Complete re-write	AME
03	03.03.2022	Minor changes	AME
04	13.06.2024	No Changes	AME
05	26/3/26	Minor updates	STN

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## 1. Introduction

At Cockermouth School we believe that our high-quality Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) will stay with our students for life. RSE is about providing students with the knowledge, skills and confidence to make safe, healthy and informed relationship choices as young people and in the future as adults. It is **not** about encouraging teenagers to become sexually active nor is it about promoting any particular lifestyle or relationship choice.

RSE at Cockermouth School is an innovative curriculum fit for the world our young people are living in. We believe in empowering our students to understand their bodies, to reflect on their relationship values and to be able to openly discuss relationships and sex. We believe that this approach will reduce the risk of unhealthy and abusive relationships.

We are committed to the important role that RSE plays in students' holistic education and we aim to build on the RSE programmes covered in primary school. As an inclusive school we respect difference and the right of people to be themselves and thus the themes of respect and safety for oneself and others underpins all of our RSE modules.

## 2. Legislation

From September 2020 the 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*' became statutory. 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.

## 3. Organisation and delivery

The RSE programme will be led by the Head of Personal Development (PD) department.

In Years 7-11 RSE will be delivered through Personal Development lessons by PD teachers and in Years 12 and 13 the Sixth Form team in allocated Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) time. Teachers and all those contributing to Relationships & Sex education will work within an agreed framework as set out in this policy.

The RSE programme will be taught through a range of teaching methods and interactive activities. All students within the school have equal access to Relationships & Sex education. Opportunities to reflect upon the programme will be made available, through PD lessons, to the School Council and LGBT group.

Topics are revisited in order to allow provision for previous absence and different levels of understanding, maturity and learning abilities. Students identified with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) also receive this programme, with additional support from a Teaching Assistant during lessons or the Strategic Resource Provision (SRP) as required.

Where and when deemed appropriate and if available, we will work with external specialist organisations, consultants and healthcare professionals to ensure our curriculum reflects current best practice.

## 4. Curriculum design

Our RSE programme is an integral part of our whole school PSHE education provision and 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'* – Families, Respectful relationships, Online and media, Being Safe, Intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health. (See Appendix 1)

We will ensure RSE is inclusive of all students and matched to the needs of our students through careful planning and execution.

Lessons will be differentiated by class teachers to ensure that content explored, and materials used are age appropriate. Selected resources, such as books and film clips, will be used which support and promote understanding within a moral context and the moral obligation we have to protect our students from exploitation and abuse.

Learning about relationships and sex education in PD lessons will link to/complement learning in Science, Religious Studies and Computing.

Assessment in RSE is not in the form of an examination. It will take the approach that students have an opportunity to demonstrate increasing knowledge and understanding and as far as possible the development of skills. Student's knowledge and understanding will be assessed throughout and at the end of units studied. Students will be encouraged to evaluate their own learning and progress through the completion of self-assessment.

## 5. RSE and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Where possible all students will remain with their class for RSE lessons. Students with SEND or students who have been identified as likely to need support with RSE will either receive the support of a Teaching Assistant during their RSE lessons, or arrangements will be made for specific students to be withdrawn from RSE lessons with the rest of their class to receive a differentiated version of the RSE programme delivered within the Strategically Resources Provision (SRP). The SENDCo and Head of PD will make the relevant plans prior to the commencement of RSE units.

## 6. Safe and effective practice

Strategies will be employed to establish a safe learning environment for RSE.

Teachers and students will agree and establish ground rules so that young people are aware of parameters within which they are working, encouraging respect and further promoting a safe environment.

During RSE lessons (and at other times) controversial topics and issues which need to be handled sensitively may arise. These will be considered as a department and judgement of individual teachers will decide as to whether the subjects are suitable for class discussion.

Distancing techniques such as being in a role, empathising with a character or speaking in response to the actions of others (real or imaginary) will be used to depersonalise the situations under discussion and allow students to explore their feelings about issues safely, because they are not speaking or acting as themselves.

Teachers will try to answer students' 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. If a question is felt to be inappropriate, the teacher will acknowledge it and deal with it outside the whole class setting if appropriate, or make a referral to those senior to themselves.

Teachers and students will show respect for different types of families, genders and sexualities. Students should never be asked to disclose their sexual orientation or personal information about themselves or others. However, they should be reminded if they need help or support for themselves or a friend, they should seek advice from an appropriate adult.

All staff teaching RSE will be supported by the Head of Department and Headteacher.

## 7. Safeguarding

Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue.

If a class teacher has any safeguarding concerns they must follow the school procedure and consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or, in their absence, a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## 8. Visitors/external agencies

Visitors and external agencies will be used to enhance the curriculum provision.

Any visitors used to help in the delivery of the Relationships & Sex Education programme will be clear about the boundaries of their input and will be aware of the Relationships & Sex Education curriculum, relevant school policies and their work will be planned and agreed in advance.

Where and when possible, and if relevant, the school will work with health professionals in the development and implementation of the school's Relationships & Sex programme.

At the end of sessions delivered by external agencies their contributions, including quality of resources and effectiveness, will be monitored by a member of staff from the PD department. A record will be kept in the department to inform future invitations into the department/school.

## 9. Engaging stakeholders

We are committed to working with parents and carers and support is integral to the success of our RSE curriculum, we consult parents and careers about changes to the RSE curriculum. While we have an educational and legal obligation to provide young people with Relationships & Sex Education, we respect the primary role of the parents in educating their children about these matters.

Our RSE programme is outlined in Personal Development Schemes of learning and parents/carers are welcome to explore our RSE curriculum with the Head of PD ([tinklers@cockermouthschool.org](mailto:tinklers@cockermouthschool.org)).

## 10. Withdrawal from RSE

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE and not part of the science curriculum.

An invitation to discuss such requests will be extended to parents.

A parental request to withdraw their child from RSE will be respected by the school up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the student wishes to receive Relationships and Sex Education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with RSE during one of those terms. (Page 6 -7 paragraphs 16-23 of new statutory guidance).

## 11. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Teachers will critically reflect on their work in delivering RSE through the standard departmental reviews that apply to all areas of the curriculum.

Head of PD department will undertake lesson drop-ins and observations in accordance with the school procedure and report to their Line Manager.

Students will have opportunities to review and reflect on their learning during lessons.

Student voice will be influential in adapting and amending planned learning activities. Opportunities will be built into lessons to enable this to happen.

## 12. Linked policies

Safeguarding Policy  
Online Safety Policy  
Student Anti-bullying Statement  
Behaviour Policy  
Equality Scheme

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