

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

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Introduction

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is part of a lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. At Penwortham Priory Academy, RSE is centered on personal safety, caring for others and building strong family relationships. This is coupled with teaching pupils about sexual health (including safe sex), and sexuality.

Effective relationship and sex education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. RSE at Penwortham Priory Academy is intended to help pupils learn about relationships, emotions, sexuality and sexual health.

Our aim to present relevant facts in an objective and balanced manner. Lessons are set in the context of the family, friends and wider societal issues and address responsibilities that arise from within these relationships.

Tackling misogyny, harmful online influences, and sexualised content, as well as teaching digital respect and online behaviours is included in the curriculum.

RSE at Penwortham Priory Academy will help young people learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

Under the Academies Act 2010, all schools must provide a balanced and broadly-based curriculum which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life

Legislation

We are required to teach RSE as part of statutory guidance that states from September 2026, all schools must deliver Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) in accordance with the revised statutory guidance published in December 2025.”

The parental right to withdraw pupils from RSE remains in primary and secondary education, for aspects of sex education which are not part of the Science curriculum.

Documents that inform the school’s RSE policy include:

- Education Act 2002, Section 80A (legal basis for RSHE)
- Education Act 1996, Section 403 (legal basis for sex education requirements)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) – Statutory safeguarding guidance (Sept 2019)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- DfE statutory guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (updated December 2025, effective 1 September 2026).

Every Child Matters (ECM) & Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC)

The delivery of RSE at Penwortham Priory Academy is underpinned by the following moral and value statements:

- The delivery of RSE is factual, sensitive and balanced.
- RSE within the school promotes meaningful, loving, and healthy relationships.
- Whilst delivering RSE staff will avoid the imposition of personal opinion. Instead they will stay focused on the social, moral, spiritual, health and education aspects of the topics.

Across the faiths, there is obviously some variation in attitudes and outlooks in regard to Relationships and Sex. Whilst such views are not necessarily shared by all, they must receive and respect the teaching of RSE at Penwortham Priory Academy is respectful of all cultural and religious differences. The teaching of RSE is in line with outcomes outlined within the ECM framework, specifically, “Be Healthy” & “Stay Safe”.

Curriculum relevant to Penwortham Priory pupils

Curriculum follows the seven guiding principles from the 2026 DfE guidance including relevance, engagement, and transparency.

While promoting the values above, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by using relevant local data and information related to RSE/Health/PSHE education to inform planning and to address the identified needs of the whole school community.

The Statutory Guidance gives content for primary and secondary, but not by key stage or year. This is due to the ‘age and developmentally appropriate’ judgement varying by school, context and community issues. At Penwortham Priory Academy the use of the PSHE Association Programme of Study is supportive of guidance towards age-appropriate delivery. Curriculum planning considers the guidance and experience of pupils, to ensure that the taught topics are appropriate for them to learn.

Parents can request curriculum content and lesson resources from Ms Smith at t.smith@priory.lancs.sch.uk Resources that are copyright protected must be viewed in school.

The Teaching of Relationships and Sex Education

Our RSE content is delivered through Learning for Life Days and some Health Education in Period 6 Learning for Life. The details of which are contained within three documents:

- Learning for Life Days Curriculum – Overarching plan
- Learning for Life Days Detailed Plan – Content as directed by the PSHE Association
- Learning for Life P6 Plan – Titles of every session

Relationships Education Themes	Sex Education Themes
A. Families • Different family structures, including same-sex parents • What stable, caring relationships look like • The importance of respect and care within families B. Respectful Relationships (Including Friendships) • Healthy friendships • Respect, equality and non-discrimination • Challenging misogyny and stereotypes (a new 2026 priority) C. Online and Media • Behaviour online, digital respect, risks and safety • Harmful sexual content online, including pornography • Deepfakes, AI-generated images, online misogyny, incel culture (new 2026 additions) D. Being Safe • Consent • Coercion, harassment, exploitation • Recognising unsafe situations • Personal safety in public spaces E. LGBT Content Integrated Throughout Secondary schools must integrate LGBT content into the curriculum, not deliver as a standalone.	A. Sexual Relationships & Sexual Activity • Readiness for sexual activity • Healthy intimate relationships • Pressures and expectations B. Contraception & Pregnancy • Contraceptive methods • Pregnancy, choices, and miscarriage • Safe sex and reducing risk C. Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) • Facts about STIs • Transmission and prevention D. Sexual Ethics & the Law • Consent in law • Sexual harassment • The law on sexual activity, abuse, exploitation E. Explicit online content (where age-appropriate) • Pornography • Online sexual pressures • Sexting / image-based abuse

Penwortham Priory Academy teachers teach this curriculum. Year 11 Day 5 – Sexual Health – Prevent is taught by a specific team of teachers. FGM and issues in relation to pornography are taught by the Religious Studies Lead Teacher at the end of Year 9.

We may use outside agencies in our education. Examples of which are below:
 Lancashire County Council Performance groups – Driver and Passenger Safety Year 7 and Year 9 Assembly.
 Lancashire Fire and Rescue – Bonfire Night Safety Briefing. Summer Water Sources Safety Briefing – Whole school
 Sexual Health Team – Lunchtime quizzes with Year 10 and 11

Individuals may receive education from: The School Nurse. We Are With You. Smoke Free. KEY. Compass Bloom, NEST. CANW. Barnardo's. Child and Family Wellbeing. The Wish Centre.

Pupil voice and needs assessments are also used to inform our curriculum.

Accessibility for all

Penwortham Priory Academy is committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), can fully access and benefit from Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). The 2026 statutory guidance emphasises the need for carefully sequenced, relevant and inclusive content, and the school will meet this requirement by implementing the following measures:

- Differentiation and adaptation of teaching where required
- Enhanced preparation
- Resources prepared as in other subjects to meet specific needs
- Targeted support and reasonable adjustments
- Personalised learning for complex needs
- Collaboration with SEND teaching assistants
- Ensuring emotional safety
- Monitoring progress and engagement

What kind of language will be considered acceptable and appropriate for use in RSE lessons?

Staff will:

- Use correct anatomical vocabulary (explicitly required)
- Use clear, unequivocal language in an objective manner
- Discuss what 'slang' words mean and say that some can be seen as offensive. Staff will use their judgement in discussion depending on understanding and maturity level of pupils in the RSE classes.
- Avoiding and challenging harmful stereotypes and misogynistic language
- Ensuring safe, respectful and age-appropriate communication

How will teachers answer questions that relate to sex education from which the child has been withdrawn?

If parents have exercised their right to withdraw from certain content:

- The pupil may still hear topics discussed informally among peers.
- They may feel embarrassed, confused, or left out.

Teacher actions:

- Recognise the pupil's need for reliable information even if they cannot be taught it in class.
- Encourage them to talk with a parent or trusted adult (while respecting the withdrawal).
- Offer pastoral support, not detailed information on the withdrawn topic.

Example teacher phrase:

- “Because your parents have chosen for you not to take part in that part of the lesson, the best person to talk to is them or another trusted adult at home or in school. If you want help finding someone, I can support you.”

Any questions that raise safeguarding concerns will be reported in line with school policy.

Monitoring & Evaluation of RSE

The RSE programme is reviewed on an annual basis by Ms Smith (Lead Practitioner for Personal Development). Stakeholder, partner agencies and community discussions may inform the curriculum. Lessons are observed by the Lead Practitioner for Personal Development. Teachers provide feedback to each other regarding content and resources. Pupils are consulted on the delivery and effectiveness of any new lessons. Parental feedback is taken into account in planning of lessons where appropriate. Mrs Crank - Assistant Principal (Safeguarding and Pastoral Lead), Mr Eastham – Principal and Trustees ensure RSE is delivered in-line with Statutory Guidance.

Safety and Confidentiality

RSHE teaching may lead to safeguarding disclosures due to the updated 2026 emphasis on online harms, misogyny, coercion and unhealthy relationship norms.

Staff follow current safeguarding legislation and guidance, including ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’.

We make it clear to pupils what our procedures are with regard to confidentiality.

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. Teachers will consult with the designated safeguarding lead Mrs Crank and in her absence another DSL. Names of DSLs can be located in the reception area of the Academy.

Parental Rights and the Curriculum

The legislation brought in through the Children and Social Work Act 2017 brought important changes in relation to parental rights to withdraw children from school RSE:

- Parents will not be able to withdraw their child from relationships education.
- At secondary school level parents will be able to withdraw their child from sex education components (not relationships education or which sits in the National Curriculum as part of science in maintained schools) up to three terms before the pupil turns 16. **However, a pupil will also have a right to opt into sex education from their 15th birthday**

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from the RSE element of the

National Science Curriculum. This is the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction.

Parents are to be reassured that no element of sex education acts as a form of encouragement, but as education to keep pupils safe in the future.

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from aspects of the sex education programme then they need to follow the instructions in annual RSE Guidance material emailed to parents. This instructs parents to email the Lead Practitioner of Personal Development stating which elements of sex education they wish to withdraw their child from and their reasons for the request. Parents will be invited into school to discuss their concerns regarding the programme and shown teaching materials. Should the request be maintained, a meeting with the Principal will follow.

We will keep parents informed regarding curriculum

- Parents are consulted on curriculum design and informed of any changes.
- Parents may review teaching materials on request.
- School communicates proactively regarding sensitive topics

RSE policy review

- The draft policy has been produced in line with Statutory Guidance recommended content by Ms Smith – Lead Practitioner for Personal Development.
- The draft policy is reviewed and approved by the Assistant Principal Mrs Crank (Safeguarding Lead and Pastoral Lead) and the Principal Mr Eastham.
- Parents then review the draft policy
- The final policy is reviewed and approved by Trustees.

As part of effective RSE provision, the RSE policy will be reviewed every year to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of pupils, staff and parents/carers/guardians and that it is in line with current Department for Education advice and guidance.