



The Acorns School

The Acorns school PSHE (including Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)) Policy 2026

Policy Date : June 2026

Review Date : June 2027

Headteacher: Mrs J Hodson

DSL: Fiona Melling

Safeguarding Governor: Mrs B Harrison

Approval Body : Governing Body

Overview/Introduction:

This policy is aligned with statutory guidance DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and health Education 2025. RSHE is delivered as part of the school's safeguarding framework.

Safeguarding: Pupils in PRU settings may be at increased risk of child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, and online grooming. RSHE equips pupils with knowledge to recognise, avoid, and report risks.

Harmful sexual behaviours: The curriculum explicitly addresses consent, respect, boundaries, sexual harassment, coercion, and abuse. Teaching supports early identification and prevention of harmful behaviours.

County lines and exploitation awareness: Pupils are taught about criminal exploitation, grooming, coercion, and gang-related risks. This includes recognising manipulation and knowing how to seek support safely.

Trauma informed practice framework: Staff recognise the impact of trauma and adverse childhood experiences. Teaching prioritises emotional safety, predictability, and supportive relationships. Pupils are not pressured to disclose personal experiences.

Online safety and digital harm prevention: Teaching addresses online grooming, pornography exposure, coercion, sextortion, misogyny, and digital exploitation. Pupils develop critical awareness and protective strategies.

Mental Health and emotional wellbeing: RSHE supports emotional regulation, resilience, self-esteem, and coping strategies. Pupils learn how to access support.

This is in-line with the 2025 guidance which is due for implementation by September 2026.

At The Acorns School, we believe that every young person has the right to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to build healthy relationships, keep themselves safe and make informed decisions about their future. Our PSHE and RSE curriculum reflects our values of respect, resilience, responsibility, and aspiration. Through a trauma-informed approach, we support pupils to develop the personal, social, and emotional skills needed to thrive in modern society.

Subject Content

RHE is taught within the subject of PSHE within the school and that this is taught in-line with statutory guidance.

'PSHE education is the **school subject** through which children and young people acquire the **knowledge, understanding and skills** they need to **manage their lives**, now and in the future.

PSHE education develops the qualities and attributes pupils need to **thrive as individuals, family members and members of society**'

(PSHE Association, 2024)

As part of the PSHE curriculum, the statutory elements of relationships and health education are included within the curriculum content.

"It is ultimately the school's responsibility to ensure resources and teaching materials are appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils, are accessible for all pupils, including those with SEND, fit with their planned programme and policy, and are sensitive to pupils' needs paragraph 53)

- Relationships Education: Describe topics (e.g., friendships, families, respectful relationships including friendships, consent, online safety and awareness, being safe).

- Health education: physical health and fitness, mental wellbeing, wellbeing online, sexual health, healthy eating

this content sits under health education which is statutory and therefore cannot be withdrawn from.

- Sex Education: human reproduction, sexual health is taught within PSHE and RSE beyond what is statutory in both the RSHE guidance and Science curriculum. This is content which can be withdrawn from parent's wish to do so.

"Everyone has relationships with others, and most pupils will develop sexual relationships at some point in their lives... Relationships education may therefore include topics related to preventing sexual abuse, for example, or avoiding sharing inappropriate material online. This can be done without describing the detail of any sexual activity involved." - provides extra clarification for secondary schools about the distinction between relationships and sex ed – i.e. it is possible to teach



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some topics without specific reference to sexual acts, meaning they would still be considered relationships education and therefore not possible to withdraw from, especially as they are focused on safeguarding young people)

Relationships and health education does not include explicit details of sexual activity but may address sensitive issues like sexual violence for safeguarding purposes.

Parents are able to view materials and have access to these should they wish to. There will be a sample available in the school office and on the school website. Resources may be viewed at open evenings or parents evening or via appointment.

How and When It Will Be Taught

Teaching is progressive and builds on prior knowledge so that the content is age-appropriate and (building knowledge progressively).

Class teachers are responsible for teaching PSHE/ RSE

Staff will be trained in line with the statutory guidance DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and health Education 2025. The Acorns School will ensure that expert providers will provide sessions, lessons, and workshops to cover specialist subjects.

Curriculum content may be supplemented and enhanced using external visitors and providers who are checked by school and have had the relevant safeguarding procedures shared with them. A member of the school teaching staff will be present at these deliveries. Visitors and providers have been chosen to benefit the children's learning and that they suit the needs of the children within school. External providers are evaluated for safeguarding and quality purposes to ensure that they are suitable to enhance the provision available for the pupils.

Expert Providers: The liberty center/ Prevent/ Shout out Uk/ Building bridges- Faith friends / NHS sexual health team/ Police- ASB prevention team / Fire services/ Careers Connect /Cyber choices/ EmPower team Lancashire/ Koothe / Smoke free Lancashire/ We are with you /

There may be times when themed weeks or specific events means that a visitor not listed here would further compliment the curriculum and therefore this is not an exhaustive list. At times when a visitor is invited in addition to the list above for PSHE/ RSE, parents will be made aware and the content of the session will be checked ahead of the delivery just as it has been for the visitors listed above.

Who Is Responsible

Head teacher: Implementation of policy

PD / PSHE Lead: Miss G Holcroft / Miss L Bowen



Class teachers: Delivery of PSHE/ RSE / PD

Teachers Planning and Delivering PSHE/ RSE/ PD

Keyworkers: Supporting teaching and learning

Safeguarding Team: Safeguarding of students

Governors: Ensure legal framework/ Statutory guidance is followed/ Policy reviews

External visitors: Responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with this policy, adhere to the sessions and content that has been pre-approved, are aware of the safeguarding procedures.

Distinction Between Relationships and Sex Education

“Everyone has relationships with others, and most pupils will develop sexual relationships at some point in their lives... Relationships education may therefore include topics related to preventing sexual abuse, for example, or avoiding sharing inappropriate material online. This can be done without describing the detail of any sexual activity involved.” - provides extra clarification for secondary schools about the distinction between relationships and sex ed – i.e. it is possible to teach some topics without specific reference to sexual acts, meaning they would still be considered relationships education and therefore not possible to withdraw from, especially as they are focused on safeguarding young people)

Relationships and health education does not include explicit details of sexual activity but may address sensitive issues like sexual violence for safeguarding purposes.

Parents are able to view materials and have access to these should they wish to. There will be a sample available in the school office and on the school website. [PSHE Teaching Resources | EC Publishing](#) Resources may be viewed at open evenings or parents evening or via appointment.

Parental Right to Withdraw

Parents have the legal right to withdraw from sex education only (not relationships education). This must be done by a written request to the headteacher. Alternative provision will be offered to students in the form of units within the PSHE/RSE curriculum.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their pupils from relationships and health education, nor can they be withdrawn from topics taught as part of the science curriculum, including science topics related to puberty or sexual reproduction.

From three terms before the pupil turns 16, a pupil can choose to opt back into sex education even if their parent has requested withdrawal. For example, if a pupil turns 16 during the autumn term, the pupil can opt back into sex education at any time after the start of the previous autumn term. Schools should ensure that pupils know they have this option.

Students will be made aware that they have this option during the consultation period.



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Accessibility for All Pupils

The Acorns School is committed to ensuring that PSHE and RSE education is accessible and inclusive for all pupils.

Teaching will be adapted to meet the needs of individual learners, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH), communication difficulties, and other vulnerabilities.

- Strategies used may include:
- Visual supports and adapted resources.
- Pre-teaching and overlearning of key concepts.
- Small group or individual teaching where appropriate.
- Scaffolding and differentiated activities.
- Use of practical and experiential learning opportunities.
- Additional processing time and alternative methods of communication.
- Trauma-informed teaching approaches that recognise the impact of adverse experiences.

Particular consideration will be given to the needs of:

- Children Looked After (CLA) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC).
- Young carers.
- Pupils who have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences.
- Pupils affected by domestic abuse.
- Pupils with SEND.
- Pupils at risk of exploitation, criminal exploitation or child sexual exploitation.
- Pupils with social, emotional, and mental health difficulties.
- Staff will ensure all teaching is age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, and responsive to pupils' individual circumstances.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Delivery is monitored through learning walks, pupil voice, monitoring of evidence, staff voice work scrutiny. Delivery will be evaluated each term through the above methods. This is part of the wider personal development and well-being review.



Assessment and Impact will be monitored by:

- Baseline and exit activities
- Knowledge retrieval
- Pupil voice
- Reflection journals
- Attendance and engagement monitoring
- Monitoring changes in safeguarding awareness

Parental Access to Curriculum Materials

Parents are able to view materials and have access to these should they wish to. There will be a sample available in the school office and on the school website. [PSHE Teaching Resources | EC Publishing](#) Resources may be viewed at open evenings or parents evening or via appointment

Answering Questions

Explain how teachers will respond to:

- Questions about topics not covered in primary sex education.
- Questions from pupils withdrawn from sex education (e.g., factual, age-appropriate responses without teaching withdrawn content. Mention this may mean correcting pupils using the anatomically correct names for body parts and saying these are the 'doctors' words' for them should it be necessary).

[The Acorns school will ensure that anyone teaching PSHE will have some training in the policy and delivery of this in line with the government guidance. Teachers will also provide and use an ask-it basket in their classroom to allow every student to have a method of asking questions.

Make this clear what this looks like for sharing correct vocabulary back to pupils if needed.

Policy Development and Review

Stakeholders include:

- Governors
- Senior Leadership Team
- PSHE Leads
- Safeguarding Team
- Parent consultation
- Pupil voice



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This policy will be updated every 2 years. If there are changes in guidance, these will be followed.

This policy is underpinned and linked with other policies within school: safeguarding/citizenship/careers/ anti-bullying/Equality/SEND etc...

Appendices

- Statutory guidance references: [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance](#)