St Hilary's Prep School Policy

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Policy

Introduction

Relationships Education is compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education in England. Sex education beyond the science curriculum is not compulsory in primary schools. St Hilary's School provides Relationships Education, age-appropriate sex education and health education through its PSCHE programme, supported by science and other subjects. As an independent school, we meet the requirements for PSHE in the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014; the separate statutory Health Education requirements do not apply to independent schools that are not academies.

This policy has regard to the Department for Education's Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance, published in July 2025 and effective from 1 September 2026: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education

Our programme helps pupils develop healthy, kind and respectful relationships, prepare for puberty, understand personal boundaries and recognise when and how to seek help. Teaching is age and stage appropriate, evidence informed and responsive to pupils' needs.

This policy has been prepared and subsequently amended in consultation with parents, staff and governors. At St. Hilary's we actively promote democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty, and respect those with different faiths and beliefs. These are fundamental British Values which underpin all that we offer, as does our School Motto 'Not for oneself but for all.'

St Hilary's Preparatory School is an equal opportunities school and PSHE should be taught in line with our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy. All pupils within school will have the same opportunity to realise their potential regardless of gender, ability, ethnicity, religion, language, class and physical ability. Some key points are:

- Equality of opportunity is a cross-curricular issue; opportunities are identified and utilised in each curriculum area or topic.
- The language and learning needs of bilingual pupils are acknowledged in all subject areas.
- The use of assessment contributes to a positive understanding of race, gender, disability, equality, ethnic and cultural diversity.
- Children should work in a variety of different groupings depending on a particular activity. They work individually, in pairs or in groups (e.g. same ability, mixed ability, single sex, friendship, role model etc.).
- We offer activities of a non-stereotypical nature.
- Children have opportunities to share cultural and other experiences in the classroom.
- That the Relationships Education and RSE is accessible for all our pupils and takes into account that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues on account of their SEND.

St Hilary's Preparatory School is a Rights Respecting School and therefore this policy is based on Children's Rights

with the responsibility of all named parties to ensure that these rights are inviolate. The school has three commitments that underpin this policy:

- To learn
- To be safe
- To show mutual respect

St Hilary's school holds values central to all of its work and therefore this RSE policy must be applied in line with the school's values system. This philosophy is essential to this RSE policy and all named parties need to be guided by this principle when applying this policy.

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 pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

Statutory Requirements

As an independent preparatory school, St Hilary's School meets the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended by the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019. Our curriculum:

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

The 2019 Regulations, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, require Relationships Education for pupils receiving primary education. The school must have regard to the applicable DfE statutory guidance and must have good reasons for departing from provisions expressed as should or should not. This policy should be read alongside the school's safeguarding policy and Keeping children safe in education 2026.

The school complies with the relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The national curriculum is not statutory for this independent school, but informs our science programme. We distinguish science, Relationships Education, health and puberty education, and additional sex education in curriculum planning and parental communications. Optional sex education is not made non-withdrawable merely by labelling it science.

At St Hilary's Preparatory School, we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

Definition

In this primary school, Relationships Education develops the knowledge and skills for positive relationships with family, friends, peers and adults, including online. Health education includes wellbeing, the body and puberty. Additional sex education provides age-appropriate factual teaching about human conception and birth in upper Prep, as identified separately in planning and parental information.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Delivery of RSE

In line with recommended good practice in RSE, our programme is planned to ensure children develop attitudes and beliefs, skills, and the knowledge and understanding which can help support their grasp of the concepts being taught. These will include the following:

Skills

These will be linked to the skills the children learn in PSCHE but will focus more on how they relate to healthy and successful relationships. For example, being able to communicate, listen, negotiate, ask for and identify sources of help and advice.

Children will also effectively develop skills in:

- negotiation
- making choices on probable outcomes
- assertion
- listening
- recognising pressures from other people and how to resist them
- dealing with challenging prejudice
- seeking help from adults – including parents, carers and professionals
- differentiating between accurate and inaccurate information

Beliefs and Attitudes

Understanding that there are a wide range of beliefs and views on sex and sexuality. Children will have the opportunity to talk in a balanced way about different opinions and learn that they can agree or disagree with the cultural, religious or moral views of others. Among the values and attitudes, they will explore are:

- learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations
- learning the value of family life and loving, stable relationships for the nurture of children
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- developing critical thinking as part of decision making

Knowledge and Understanding – Children get information about sex and sexuality from a wide range of sources, including each other, through media advertising, television, music (and music videos), magazines, as well as leaflets, books and websites. The RSE lessons will start by finding out what children already know and will aim to add to their existing knowledge and correct any misinformation they have. The knowledge and understanding component of RSE includes:

- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages
- understanding human sexuality and reproduction
- understanding emotions
- learning about the importance of committed relationships

RSE is taught within the Personal, Social, Citizenship, Health and Economic (PSCHE) curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the Science curriculum, and other aspects are included in Religious Studies, Philosophy

and other curriculum areas. For Further information, refer to the Science Policy, Religious Studies Policy, Philosophy Policy, PSCHE Policy, SMSC Policy and Promoting Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing in School Policy.

We use the PSHE Association programme of study, supplemented where appropriate by the Christopher Winter Project and Barnardo's Real Love Rocks resources. The PSCHE Lead checks the editions and individual materials used against current guidance, age and stage suitability, factual accuracy, accessibility and the school's planned curriculum. Naming a provider does not constitute approval of all its resources. Relevant DfE teaching resources are available at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health

Form Tutors mainly deliver lessons to their class.

When is it taught?

Relationships Education is taught progressively throughout Reception to Year 6. Teaching about the body, privacy, personal safety and puberty is distinguished from additional sex education. The overview below sets out the intended sequence; detailed lesson plans identify the content and curriculum category of each lesson.

In EYFS, PSED supports friendships, managing feelings, taking turns and respectful relationships. Children learn age-appropriate vocabulary for their bodies, privacy, personal care and how to seek help from trusted adults. Planning follows the current EYFS framework and the children's developmental needs.

In Pre-Prep, pupils learn about families, friendships, respect, body parts, growing older, hygiene, privacy, personal boundaries and keeping safe. Science explores animals, growth and life cycles at an appropriate level. These lessons do not constitute a programme of human conception or sexual activity.

In Prep, Relationships Education continues throughout Years 3–6. Puberty teaching begins in Year 4 and is revisited in Years 5–6, with earlier support where a pupil needs it. Science develops understanding of growth, life cycles and reproduction in plants and animals. Additional factual sex education about human conception and birth is planned for Years 5 and/or 6 and is identified separately for parents before teaching. Parents are informed of the precise year, term and content through the annual curriculum information. The PSCHE Lead and Science Lead agree the classification of content and ensure that information matches actual lesson plans.

We work with families and ensure that we provide a programme that is:

- Age appropriate.
- We provide further guidance and intervention if required, to support individuals with their needs/understanding.

Why is it taught?

We teach these subjects to help children build caring and respectful relationships, develop self-respect, prepare for puberty and recognise unsafe situations. Pupils learn accurate vocabulary, develop confidence in seeking help and consider information critically, including material encountered online. Teaching is positive and preventative and is not based on assumptions about pupils' sexual experience. Our programme aims to:

- Empower pupils
- Promote respect for oneself and others and an accurate understanding of growing up
- Build knowledge and skills progressively through a coherent curriculum
- Meet local needs
- Provide accessible teaching and appropriate support for vulnerable and marginalised pupils

- Prepare pupils for changes and experiences before they occur, taking account of individual development
- Reinforce value messages
- Focus on risk reduction
- Use active learning and participatory techniques
- Avoid focusing too heavily on biological issues
- Ensure that children and young people have a critical awareness of the messages that are portrayed in the media.

Dealing with Difficult Questions

We recognise that RSE can raise challenging questions due to children's natural curiosity. All staff receive training and support on delivering the curriculum and answering difficult questions. Some of the strategies we use within RSE to create a safe and secure environment are:

- Agreeing ground rules with the class prior to the topic being taught
- Make clear that pupils and staff are not expected to answer personal questions or share personal experiences
- If a teacher doesn't know the answer to a question this will be acknowledged
- Respond calmly to questions beyond the planned content or inappropriate for whole-class discussion. Teachers use professional judgement, consult the PSCHE Lead or DSL where needed, and arrange an age-appropriate individual response or signpost to parents, trusted adults or support. They do not promise to answer every explicit question. Questions from pupils withdrawn from sex education are handled sensitively without circumventing withdrawal; safeguarding concerns are acted on immediately.
- If a question is raised which alerts a member of staff that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse then the school's safeguarding procedures should be followed
- Clarify that pupils should not give out personal information or use personal names in class, but speak to someone they trust after the lesson, e.g. class teacher, pupil mentor.

Values we will promote through the curriculum are:

- respect for oneself and other people
- taking responsibility for one's actions in all situations
- honesty and loyalty in relationships
- the importance and responsibilities of the family unit for all members
- sensitivity towards the needs and views of others, especially if those views are different to one's own
- to recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications and risks of certain types of behaviour
- accepting that different people are entitled to hold different views and to respect this right.

Teaching reflects the diversity of family life, including single-parent, same-sex-parent, adoptive, foster, kinship and grandparent-led families. Pupils learn that loving, caring and stable relationships can exist in different family structures and that no child should be stigmatised because of their home circumstances. Teaching is factual, respectful and sensitive to religious beliefs. Relevant materials must align with the current guidance on biological sex, gender reassignment and contested views, and must not reinforce stereotypes or present contested beliefs as established fact.

Further Support

Teachers are asked to:

Teachers use clear, accurate vocabulary and accessible explanations, visual support and appropriate pacing. They check understanding, allow processing time, revisit concepts and adapt teaching for pupils with SEND. The PSCHE Lead liaises with the SENCO and parents as appropriate. Adaptation does not remove pupils' entitlement to Relationships Education. Staff take account of vulnerability to bullying, abuse and exploitation without making assumptions about an individual pupil.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Governing Body retains oversight of provision and assurance that the policy and curriculum meet the school's obligations. The Deputy Head and DSL coordinates review with the Headmaster and PSHE Lead. The formal approval route and date must be recorded in accordance with the school's scheme of delegation before publication.

The Headmaster

The Headmaster, alongside the PSHE Lead, is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE.

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE

Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Headmaster.

Pupils

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

Parents Right to Withdraw

Parents may request withdrawal from some or all additional sex education outside the science curriculum. In a primary school, the Headmaster must grant such a request. Parents should contact the Headmaster, who will offer a discussion to clarify the content, hear concerns and explain the possible implications of withdrawal; this discussion is not a condition of granting the request. The school records the request and arrangements. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education, health education or content properly taught within the science curriculum.

The same withdrawal right applies to pupils with SEND; there is no primary-school exceptional-circumstances or SEND exception permitting refusal. Pupils who are withdrawn receive appropriate, purposeful alternative education without stigma. Parents may withdraw or amend their request by contacting the Headmaster.

Parents receive advance information about relevant teaching: Year 2 body vocabulary and growing older; Year 4

puberty; Year 5 growth and change; and Year 6 relationships and preparation for transition. These topics are not automatically sex education. The school separately identifies any additional sex education about conception and birth in Years 5 and/or 6, explains the content, timing and withdrawal right, and consults parents on that provision.

Parents are consulted when this policy is developed or reviewed and are supported in discussing topics at home. The policy is published on the school website and supplied free on request. Parents may contact the PSCHE Lead to view all curriculum materials used in RSHE, including external resources; a representative sample is shared proactively. Access is arranged through a secure portal, presentation or another suitable method, respecting copyright without using it to refuse access. The school will not agree provider restrictions that prevent parental viewing. Parents are informed in advance of changes to the published programme, and relevant materials are available on request.

Safeguarding Children & Confidentiality

Staff act immediately on any safeguarding concern arising in or beyond lessons, report to the DSL or a deputy DSL without delay, and follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures and Keeping children safe in education 2026. Staff listen, avoid leading questions, record concerns and actions accurately and never promise secrecy. Information is handled sensitively and shared only with those who need it to safeguard the child. Pupils are told how to seek help, that they should keep trying until heard, and that abuse is never their fault. Where a child is in immediate danger, emergency action must not be delayed while waiting for the DSL. External visitors are briefed on reporting arrangements before teaching.

Monitoring Arrangements

The PSCHE Lead coordinates monitoring with the Deputy Head and DSL and relevant subject leaders.

Monitoring includes planning and resource reviews, work scrutiny where appropriate, pupil voice and assessment of knowledge and skills. Pupils are not assessed on personal disclosures. The school maintains a curriculum map against the current primary Relationships Education outcomes, with science and health provision identified separately. Reviews consider online safety, boundaries, recognising and reporting abuse, family diversity, stereotypes and respectful relationships. Leaders address gaps and report significant findings to the Governing Body.

AUTHOR/RESPONSIBLE: Mark Parton (Deputy Head and DSL)

READ & SHARED: With all staff at St Hilary's School.

REVISED: October 2026 following review against DfE RSHE guidance effective from 1 September 2026.

NEXT REVIEW DATE: June 2027, or earlier following relevant guidance or curriculum changes.

Curriculum overview

This overview summarises the programme. Detailed schemes of work must map all applicable primary outcomes and identify optional sex education separately. The PSCHE and Science Leads must verify the annual year and term allocations against lesson plans before this revised policy is approved.

Reception

Friendships, feelings, sharing, personal needs, respectful behaviour, healthy routines, body vocabulary, privacy and trusted adults.

Year 1

Families and feeling cared for; privacy, permission and respect; healthy food, exercise, hygiene and sun safety; individuality, feelings, rules and online safety.

Year 2

Friendships and loneliness; secrets, pressure and hurtful behaviour; cooperation and difference; sleep, medicines, dental health and help-seeking; body vocabulary, growing older and everyday safety.

Year 3

Different families; boundaries and hurtful behaviour; courtesy and self-respect; healthy choices, emotions, strengths and setbacks; local and unfamiliar-environment risks.

Year 4

Positive friendships including online; confidentiality and online risks; respecting difference; balanced lifestyles and dental care; physical and emotional changes in puberty, hygiene and support; medicines and household substances.

Year 5

Peer influence and friendship; safe physical contact; prejudice and discrimination; sleep, sun safety, medicines, vaccinations and allergies; identity and wellbeing; emergencies and basic first aid; science growth and change. Additional conception and birth teaching, where scheduled, is separately notified.

Year 6

Respectful discussion; personal strengths and values; body image, self-esteem and online influences; mental health, loss, change and transition; attraction, marriage and civil partnership; boundaries, pressure and permission; personal information and substance risks. Additional conception and birth teaching, where scheduled, is separately notified.

References

DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance, July 2025, effective 1 September 2026. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education

Keeping children safe in education 2026. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended; Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019; Equality Act 2010; current EYFS statutory framework.