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EXETER CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

Nursery | Pre-Prep | Prep

Relationship Education (RE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Last review: September 2025

Next review: September 2026

Governor oversight: Pastoral

Overview

The Government issued new statutory guidance for Relationships, Sex, and Health Education on 15 July 2025, with implementation expected by September 2026. Schools should continue using the 2019 guidance until then. ECS is currently updating its Personal Development program to meet the new requirements by the deadline.

This policy covers Exeter Cathedral School's approach to teaching Relationships and Sex Education from Reception to Year 8.

The policy links to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy as it addresses the welfare, health and safety of our pupils as well as preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of their later lives. It also links with our pastoral approach, our Personal Development & Wellbeing programme, our Health & Wellbeing learning and our Anti-Bullying Policy.

RE and RSE lessons will involve the creation of ground rules with the pupils, so that a safe and supportive environment can be provided. Confidentiality will form part of this so that pupils can feel safe to discuss potentially difficult feelings or experiences. A clear link to our Safeguarding Policy ensures that appropriate action can be taken where required.

RE and RSE lessons will direct children who are seeking help and advice to the appropriate person in school, appropriate websites, helplines and services.

RE and RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity.

RSE Framework

Attitudes and values

- Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations;
- Learning the values of family life and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children.
- Learning the value of respect, love and care;
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making.

Personal and social skills

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice;
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- Managing conflict
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse

Knowledge and understanding

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages;
- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;
- Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services;
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such a delay and the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

Assessment

We will assess children's learning from each new topic or series of lessons by carrying out an initial activity that gauges pupils' starting point (baseline) in terms of their existing knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs. This is used to inform the teacher's planning for that module.

Pupils are assessed through ongoing assessment during the unit of work, teachers will check understanding through written and verbal feedback.

Inclusion and Differentiation

We will ensure that our RSE teaching is inclusive of difference, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, culture, age, faith or belief, or other life experiences.

Differentiation is achieved through planning according to the needs of the class. RSE is taught to mixed ability groups.

Cross-curricular Links

Science teaches about the biological facts relating to human growth, puberty and reproduction. Teaching about contraception and STIs is also included.

Personal Development & Wellbeing teaches pupils about the different social contexts, influences and beliefs that affects personal behaviour. Personal Development & Wellbeing also develops a positive vocabulary and the strategies and skills young children need to stay healthy and safe.

ICT teaches about online safety and how to use the internet as a safe resource.

There are other relevant learning opportunities in the curriculum that ensure we have a broad and developed RSE programme running through our curriculum.

Parents and Guardians will have access to the curriculum planning and relevant resources to support them at home. They will be kept informed of any changes or updates to the curriculum. They will also be informed in advance by email about sensitive topics so they have the chance to discuss these with their children if they wish.

We will communicate to parents about the right to withdraw their children by email when we are notifying them about the topics. If a parent requests that their child be removed from 'sex education' the School will provide support by signposting the resources that school will be using to support the RSE curriculum.

Our RE and RSE programme

In Relationship Education in Reception to Year 6 we cover the following topics:

	RE Topics
Reception	- Feelings - Relationships - Similarities and differences - Identity - Privacy
Year 1	- Recognising privacy - Families - Feeling cared for - How behaviour affects others, - Feelings - Managing when things go wrong - Staying safe - Seeking permission
Year 2	- Managing secrets - Resisting pressure and getting help - Recognising hurtful behaviour - Growing older, including identifying and naming parts of the body, including external genitalia - Everybody's body - Playing and working cooperatively - Sharing opinions
Year 3	- Relationships – positive attributes of healthy relationships - Families - Personal boundaries - Safely responding to others - Respecting ourselves and others - Belonging to a community
Year 4	- Positive Friendships - Diversity - Positive friendships, (including online) - Responding to hurtful behaviour - Managing confidentiality - Discussing differences sensitively - Belonging to a community - Puberty (physical and emotional changes, external genitalia, menstrual wellbeing, erections, wet dreams, importance of personal hygiene).
Year 5	- Consent and appropriate touch - Staying safe online - Managing friendships and peer influences - Physical contact and feeling safe - Recognising prejudice and discrimination - Personal identity.

Year 6	Attraction to others Romantic relationships Consent in different situations Respecting ourselves and others Valuing diversity Human reproduction and birth Increasing independence.
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In Relationship and Sex Education in Year 7 and Year 8 we cover the following topics:

	RSE Topics
Year 7	Online safety Diversity Prejudice and bullying Puberty Unwanted contact FGM Relationship boundaries
Year 8	Gender Identity Sexual orientation Consent and 'sexting' An introduction to contraception Discrimination in all its forms (including racism, religious discrimination, disability discrimination, sexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia) Transition to secondary/next school.

While promoting the content above, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced curriculum by providing a programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues.

We will provide equality by ensuring that the School strives to do its best for all of our pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children.

ECS will always respect how pupils choose to identify themselves, understanding that depending on their age and maturity, their sexual orientation and gender identity may be ‘emerging’.

Teaching

Teachers will teach the majority of content and this will be overseen by the Head of Department, Senior Deputy Head and the Deputy Head (Pupils). Visiting speakers will be invited to be part of the programme where appropriate.

The programme will be taught through a range of teaching methods that are conducive to pupil learning. A range of RSE resources will support the curriculum and evolve over time. Resources assured by the PSHE association will be prioritised. In Year 4 we use the Medway scheme or ‘ReThink Periods’.

Pupils will be given the opportunity to ask questions and their questions will be answered. If necessary, teachers will ask a pupil to wait for an answer to consult with the School’s leadership team.

An anonymous question box will be placed in form classrooms for pupils who are not comfortable raising questions in an open setting.

If we have any reason to believe that a child is at risk, staff will immediately contact a member of the Safeguarding Team.

Whilst the policy refers to RE and RSE, it will appear as a different name on the timetable. It will continue to be the same syllabus, including parts which are statutory and prescribed by law.

Appendix

RSE and Personal Development & Wellbeing topics

1. Identity (their personal qualities, attitudes, skills, attributes and achievements and what influences these; understanding and maintaining boundaries around their personal privacy, including online).
2. Relationships (including different types and in different settings, including online).
3. A healthy (including physically, emotionally and socially), balanced lifestyle (including within relationships, work-life, exercise and rest, spending and saving and lifestyle choices).
4. Risk (identification, assessment and how to manage risk, rather than simply the avoidance of risk for self and others) and safety (including behaviour and strategies to employ in different settings, including online in an increasingly connected world).
5. Diversity and equality (in all its forms, with due regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010).
6. Rights (including the notion of universal human rights), responsibilities (including fairness and justice) and consent (in different contexts).
7. Change (as something to be managed) and resilience (the skills, strategies and ‘inner resources’ we can draw on when faced with challenging change or circumstance)
8. Power (how it is used and encountered in a variety of contexts including online; how it manifests through behaviours including bullying, persuasion, coercion and how it can be challenged or managed through negotiation and ‘win-win’ outcomes).
9. Career (including enterprise, employability and economic understanding).

From September 2025, PSHE and R(S)E will be known as 'Personal Development' at ECS. It will continue to be the same syllabus, including those parts which are statutory and prescribed by law. Following pupil consultation, we are changing the name to one we feel better reflects the syllabus content and will be more resonant for our pupils.