The Parkside School
Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Approved by:	Mr Paul Stanley Chair of Governors	**Date:** September 2026
Signed:		
Next review due: **by:**	September 2027 Miss Kirsty Lofty	

A) The policy statement
B) Content
C) Evaluation and assessment

A) THE POLICY STATEMENT

Purpose of RSHE at Parkside

The Department for Education (DfE) mandates that high-quality, evidence-based Relationships, Sex, and Health Education (RSHE) is essential for preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life. Rather than merely transmitting biological or physical facts, effective teaching at Parkside School focuses on the positive formation of the pupil's emerging persona and, when appropriate, their developing sexual identity.

The core purpose of our RSHE curriculum is to provide pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health, and relationships. Through this curriculum, we support young people in cultivating key positive character attributes—including resilience, self-worth, self-respect, honesty, integrity, courage, kindness, and trustworthiness. Furthermore, our strategic focus is heavily directed toward the proactive prevention of harm, empowering pupils to understand, recognise, identify, and confidently report when things are not right.

Our provision reflects a whole-school approach aimed at improving behavior, helping pupils build and maintain healthy relationships, understanding feelings, regulating emotions, making healthy choices to stay safe, well and happy, and respecting diversity.

Legal Requirements

The law in relation to RSHE states:

As a school covering both primary and secondary phases, Parkside must provide Relationships Education to all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. We must also provide Health Education. In teaching RSHE, we must have regard to the 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State, dated July 2025, of which comes into force as of September 2026. We also have regard to legal duties

set out in the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), Keeping children safe in Education 2026, and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.

The governing bodies of schools are required to keep an up to date RSHE Policy that describes content and the organisation of RSHE provided outside the national curriculum science orders.

Parents/Carers have the right to withdraw their children from Sex Education lessons but not from content delivered through the science curriculum.

For further guidance on content see 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, July 2025.

Other Related Policies and Documents

The RSHE policy can also be linked to other policies. e.g:

- General Data Privacy Notice
- Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance (CEIAG) Policy
- E-Safety Policy 2026
- Safeguarding Incorporating Child Protection
- AI use policy
- Acceptable use policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Safe Touch Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

Policy on Support for Gender Questioning Children

Children who are questioning their gender may need sensitive and thoughtful involvement from their school. When handled well, with parental involvement and attention to any clinical input, the school's involvement can help to avoid safeguarding issues arising. While the *Gender Questioning Children* document originally launched as a draft for consultation in December 2023, the core safeguarding principles and operational rules have been formally integrated into statutory guidance under Part Two of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026* ('Considering requests for support with social transition'). This means Parkside must have regard to these exact statutory requirements:

1. Safeguarding and Biological Sex: All decisions must prioritize safeguarding and align with the principle that the school's legal duties are framed by a child's biological sex. We must accurately record a child's legal name and sex in the admissions register.
2. Social Transition: There is no general duty to allow a child to 'social transition' (changing name, pronouns, uniform, facilities). Schools should take a cautious approach
3. Parental Engagement: Parents must not be excluded from decisions relating to requests for social transition, and schools must engage parents as a matter of priority unless there is a significant risk of harm to the child.
4. Names and Pronouns: Schools may allow informal name changes only after consulting parents. Primary school children should not have different pronouns used about them. For older children, the school can decline a request to change pronouns and should only agree if the benefit outweighs the impact on the school community, ensuring no staff or pupil is compelled to use preferred pronouns.
5. Single-Sex Spaces: Requests for social transition must not include allowing access to single-sex spaces (toilets, changing rooms, dormitories, or sex-separated sports) designated for the opposite biological sex. The school adheres to the principle that single-sex spaces must be protected based on biological sex, including toilets, showers, changing rooms, and competitive sports where safety or fairness is threatened by mixed participation. Alternative arrangements will be sought for pupils who experience distress using facilities designated for their biological sex, ensuring the safety and privacy of all pupils.
6. Uniform: A gender questioning child should generally be held to the same uniform standards as other children of their biological sex. Any uniform change must follow consultation with parents

Policy Development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils, and parents/carers. We have used the consultation process to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and meets the needs of our community, alongside adapting and implementing lawful changes of the RSHE 2025 guidance and KCSIE 2026. This Policy must be reviewed annually. The Governing Body ultimately holds the final responsibility for the policy.

How are parents involved?

Parkside is committed to proactively engaging parents and ensuring full transparency regarding RSHE curriculum content and materials. At Parkside the involvement of parents and carers in supporting RSHE is valued, with a positive home school link ensuring a better outcome in the development of the young people we wish to foster. An online RSHE parent/carer consultation was

undertaken in January 2026, to help inform the on-going development of an effective and relevant curriculum.

1. Viewing Materials: Parents and carers have the right to view all curriculum materials used to teach RSHE on request. Requests for materials will be responded to positively, adhering to copyright law where necessary (e.g., sharing via the RSHE padlet or parents evenings, not agreeing to contractual restrictions from external providers).
2. Consultation: We consult parents when developing and reviewing this RSHE policy.
3. Communication: A copy outlining the school philosophy and brief details of the RSHE curriculum is available to parents on the school website. Before the start of the formal teaching of the RSHE curriculum-an email is sent home informing parents and carers of lesson content and can also be found on class curriculum maps.

Parents' Right to Withdrawal

Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from Relationships education or Health education. Parents/carers however have the right to withdraw their child from the non-statutory sex education components within RSHE.

• Primary: Requests for withdrawal will be automatically granted, other than content covered in the science curriculum.

• Secondary: Requests for withdrawal must be put in writing to the Head Teacher using the specified form (Appendix A). The Head Teacher will discuss the request with parents, clarifying the benefits and any detrimental effects of withdrawal. The Head Teacher may refuse the request in exceptional circumstances, such as safeguarding concerns or a pupil's specific vulnerability. From three terms before the pupil turns 16, the pupil can choose to opt back into sex education regardless of parental request. If a pupil is withdrawn, the school provides appropriate, purposeful alternative schoolwork during the period of withdrawal.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **The Governing Body/Trustees** The Governing Body/Trustees approve the RSHE policy, ensure teaching is accessible to all pupils with SEND, ensure content aligns with statutory guidance, and hold the Head Teacher accountable for implementation.
- **The Head Teacher** The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring RSHE is taught consistently, sharing all resources and materials with parents, and managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory sex education components. In secondary, the Head Teacher may refuse withdrawal in exceptional circumstances such as safeguarding concerns.
- **Subject lead** The subject lead is responsible for promoting and developing schemes of work and sharing new knowledge with staff such as local data. The Subject lead will support the training and delivery of training to staff to

ensure all staff have regular CPD and are equipped for the teaching of RSHE. The subject lead will monitor data on Earwig to ensure progress of pupils and support individual cases where needs be. Subject lead completes parent/carer, staff and pupil surveys and analyses data from this to ensure effective teaching and learning is taking place. Subject Lead ensures all resources and the online padlet are up to date and equipped for purpose.

- **Staff** are responsible for sensitive and high-quality delivery, modelling positive attitudes, monitoring progress, responding to individual pupil needs, and responding appropriately to withdrawal requests. Staff must report any safeguarding concerns or disclosures immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSHE

B) CONTENT

Outline of Parkside's School's RSHE Programme

The curriculum covers all statutory content outlined in the July 2025 guidance. The curriculum will be differentiated and individualised to meet particular needs and abilities. RSHE is taught to prepare pupils for adulthood, supporting EHCP outcomes such as independence and community participation, which also aligns with our TITAN Ready to go!, Careers curriculum, THRIVE, OPAL and Zones of Regulation curriculum.

RSHE is delivered through both informal and formal teaching. Formal teaching occurs within the RSHE curriculum, Science lessons, and incorporates a whole-school approach. The curriculum is supported by high-quality, evidence-based resources. We ensure resources are chosen for being inclusive, positive, unbiased, and age/understanding ap
propriate. Each class has 1 timetabled lesson of RSHE per week taught by the class teacher.

We draw on the PSHE Association Education Planning Framework for Pupils with SEND (Key Stages 1–4) 2026 to map content and differentiate learning, using the six structured sections (Self-Awareness, Self-care/Support/Safety, Managing Feelings, Changing and Growing, Healthy Lifestyles, The World I Live In) to tailor the curriculum to individual pupil needs, potentially drawing on content across different key stages corresponding to developmental stage rather than chronological age. To support specialized developmental pathways, we will be trialling the 'Learn and Thrive' program for our sensory department this year.

We use the Life Lessons curriculum, which provides comprehensive coverage of statutory content through an evidence-based, peer-led, and relational approach. The resources are designed to be inclusive, using features like dual coding,

scaffolding activities, word banks, and emotions characters to support pupils with SEND, Resources are used from Pol-Ed (available to Norfolk schools), covering Relationships, Keeping Safe, Understanding the Law, and Well-being, appropriate for all Key Stages (EYFS up to Post-16).

Furthermore, we utilize Common Sense Media resources to support age-appropriate digital citizenship, media literacy, and online safety, alongside the NSPCC SEND adapted programme resources for 'speak out and stay safe', 'online safety', 'Talk relationships, 'PANTS', and 'love life'.

Protective behaviours are taught at all Key Stages if appropriate and where identified for individuals. The RSHE curriculum will be differentiated by the expectations set out for Primary and Secondary pupils in 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, June 2025. Where appropriate, the curriculum will be individualised to meet particular needs. The curriculum will be complemented by resources and guidance issued by the PSHE association, Life lessons and POL-ED.

Resources will be tailored by teaching staff to enable pupils to access the primary and secondary curriculum expectations. There will be a focus on the education of sexual intimacy with individual pupils who have shown a developing sexual persona.

It is recognised that much of RSHE comes through the daily experiences of the pupils; therefore the importance of all school staff in the development of social relationships is emphasised and the importance of a cohesive whole school staff approach to the RSHE curriculum. Pupils who transition to Pathways for Post-16 education still receive RSHE as set out in this document.

Parkside School recognises that while structured, digital-led lessons form the foundation of our curriculum, engaging with the wider world is vital for our pupils' personal development. Alongside our core schemes of work, we actively utilise and recognise the immense value of inviting external guest speakers—such as emergency workers (police staff, firefighters, and paramedics), healthcare professionals, and community specialists—into school. These visits provide invaluable real-life context, help pupils understand the role of those who protect and support us, and build practical personal safety, first-aid, and emergency-response skills in an interactive, non-alarmist manner. In strict compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 and statutory RSHE guidance, all guest speakers and materials are strictly vetted by the school leadership team prior to delivery to ensure they are age-appropriate, unbiased, and fully inclusive. Parkside staff remain in the classroom to supervise all external sessions at all times and ensure that any sensitive themes or unexpected pupil disclosures are managed immediately under the school's active safeguarding and confidentiality protocols.

Furthermore, RSHE at Parkside is enriched by our active, year-round participation in Social, Moral, Spiritual, and Cultural (SMSC) days and school-wide events. We strategically tie national and global awareness events—such as Safer Internet Day, Anti-Bullying Week, World Mental Health Day, and celebrations of neurodiversity and diverse cultures—directly into our timetabled RSHE content. These shared experiences foster a deep sense of belonging and community, encourage mutual respect, and provide practical opportunities for pupils to rehearse positive character attributes—such as kindness, empathy, and citizenship—across both the primary and secondary departments. This holistic approach ensures our pupils are thoroughly prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities, and diverse experiences of modern adult life.

Additionally, to ensure all pupils are supported sensitively and respectfully, Parkside fully utilises the Department for Education's (DfE) Period Products Scheme to provide free, accessible period pads and menstrual products, strictly avoiding outdated or stigmatising terminology such as 'sanitary items' or 'feminine hygiene products' in both our policy documentation and learning environments

Key areas of the curriculum;

Primary Phase: Relationships & Sex Education (Compulsory)
Primary relationships education must focus on building the foundational character blocks of positive relationships, teaching children how to keep themselves safe (both online and offline), and enabling them to recognise and report concerns without causing unnecessary alarm

Phase/unit	Previous focus	Statutory updates and additions (RSHE 2025 and KCSIE 2026)
Families and People Who Care for Me	Families (including same-sex parents and civil partnerships)	• Teach that stable, caring relationships are at the heart of happy families. • Focus on how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others. • Illustrate a wide range

		of family structures (single parents, grandparents, young carers, foster parents) positively to prevent stigma
Caring Friendships	Managing conflict, loneliness	• Teach that healthy friendships do not make others feel lonely or excluded. • Learn that most people feel lonely at some point and there is no shame in feeling lonely or talking about it. • Teach conflict resolution skills, emphasizing that resorting to violence is never right
Respectful, Kind Relationships	Boundaries, assertiveness vs. controlling behaviour, stereotypes, bullying	• Learn how to pay attention to the needs/preferences of others and how to balance different needs/wishes in relationships. • Explore the difference between being kind and neglecting your own needs. • Focus on self-respect and how it links to happiness, fostering self-esteem and identity. • Teach the responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to a trusted adult). • Challenge negative or destructive stereotypes that lead to bullying

Online Safety and Awareness	Minimum social media age (13), online risks, reporting	• Teach that the same principles of respect apply to online relationships as face-to-face, even when users are anonymous. • Critically evaluate online relationships and understand risks of communicating with people never met offline (e.g., adult strangers pretending to be children). • Understand that any material provided online can be circulated, and once circulated, there is no way of deleting it everywhere. • Understand how to use privacy and location settings
Being Safe	Body ownership, appropriate boundaries/contact, reporting abuse	• Teach the concept of privacy and that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe • Explicitly use correct biological names for private body parts (penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum, nipples) so children have the vocabulary to report abuse • Prepare girls and boys for puberty and manage menstruation sensitively before its onset (as early as age 8) to avoid distress
Primary Sex Education	Recommendation for	Must be taught in line

(Non-Statutory)	Years 5/6 science-aligned conception and birth	with the factual description of conception in the national science curriculum. • Parents have an automatic right to request withdrawal from sex education lessons outside the science curriculum

Secondary Phase: Relationships & Sex Education (Compulsory)

Secondary RSHE must provide a clear progression from primary content, developing deeper critical evaluation skills, addressing online harms, and teaching the specific laws surrounding consent, exploitation, and medical health

Phase/unit	**Previous focus**	**Statutory updates and additions (RSHE 2025 and KCSIE 2026)**
Families	Legal status of marriage/civil partnership, "common-law marriage" myth, forced marriage under 18 is illegal	• Teach the myths surrounding "common-law marriage"—clarifying that cohabiting couples do not automatically obtain legal rights, benefits, or protections. • Clarify that forced marriage and marrying before 18 is a criminal offence (Age of Marriage Act 2023). • Teach the roles of parenting, including the importance of the early years of a child's life for brain development
Respectful Relationships	Consent, power dynamics, misogyny, pornography, incels	• Teach that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent—it requires active kindness, care, attention to vulnerabilities, and an

		awareness of power dynamics. • Understand that just because someone says "yes," that does not automatically make it ethically okay. • Teach pupils how to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice. • Teach skills for ending relationships/friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings (disappointment, hurt, frustration) that endings bring. • Provide structured discussion on how extreme online sub-cultures (such as "involuntary celibates" or "incels") and negative online influencers distort sexual ethics and relationships
Online and Media	Deepfakes, AI-generated imagery risks, sharing sexual images of U18s is a crime, scams/sextortion	• Teach that keeping, generating, or forwarding indecent/sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if it is self-generated, consensual, or created using AI. • Detail the severe legal penalties of U18 image crimes, including criminal records and imprisonment. • Reassure pupils that they will not be in trouble for asking for help if an image of themselves has been shared.

		• Teach the prevalence, malicious use, and harms of deepfakes (manipulated videos/photos) and how to identify them. • Address risks of AI chatbots in creating fake intimacy or providing harmful advice. • Teach how online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise wrong or unhealthy behaviours, including content that encourages misogyny, violence, or weapon use
Being Safe	Consent laws, exploitation, abuse, grooming, FGM/virginity testing, criminal offences of strangulation	• Teach that strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that applying force to the neck is an offence regardless of whether it causes physical injury. • Explicitly teach the laws relating to stalking, fixated, and obsessive behaviours. • Teach how to increase personal safety in public spaces and trust instincts, emphasizing that a victim is never to blame and seemingly trustworthy people can have harmful intentions. • Teach knife crime laws and personal safety using local context, avoiding fear-based education. Teach that carrying

		weapons is statistically uncommon to prevent pupils from thinking they need to carry a weapon for "protection"
Intimate and Sexual Relationships	Age of consent, contraception, pregnancy, STIs, accessing confidential services	• Teach that sex can and should be enjoyable, positive, and safe for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent. • Provide unbiased, legally, and medically accurate information on all pregnancy choices (keeping the baby, adoption, and abortion). • Teach the use, availability, and access routes for the HIV prevention drugs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP). • Teach pupils how to actively navigate the local healthcare system: what a GP is, when to use A&E vs. minor injuries, how to access sexual health clinics, and the role of local pharmacists. • Teach the concept of Gillick competence and that the legal age of medical consent is 16

How will Parkside deal with sexually explicit questions

Parkside will:-

- Allow individual staff to use their professional judgement as to answering questions in front of the whole class, or individually taking into account Safeguarding Policy.
- Encourage pupils to ask their parents/carers any question outside the planned programme.
- Set out clear ground rules regarding personal questions which are agreed by staff beforehand.
- Have designated adults that pupils know of to go to if they wish to talk.

If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, or related to content from which they have been withdrawn, teachers will respond appropriately to ensure pupils are informed and do not seek answers online. This includes advising the pupil to speak to their parents or a trusted adult, and signposting to appropriate support services. Teachers are supported with training on managing such questions sensitively.

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

Staff will

- Use the correct terms for all body parts.

- 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.

- Staff must model positive behaviour, avoiding language that might perpetuate harmful stereotypes, and be conscious of everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and stereotypes. Where misogynistic ideas are expressed, staff should challenge the ideas rather than the person expressing them.

What Ground Rules specific to RSHE will Parkside use?

- Respect will be shown at all times.

- Safeguarding policy must be implemented.

- An agreement of the basic rules is agreed at the start of every lesson.

Single and mixed sex groups

RSHE teaching will generally be in mixed-sex groups. However, separating classes by sex may be considered where the school identifies a specific need or to create a safe space for discussion of a particular topic, such as menstruation. In these cases, teaching staff will consult with the relevant Head of Department.

C) EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

How pupil success is assessed
The delivery of RSHE is monitored by the Subject Leader (Kirsty Lofty) through observation, planning scrutiny, learning walks, and ongoing evaluation of curriculum needs in meetings with staff. Subject leader monitoring is in place to ensure the curriculum is being delivered effectively across the school and pupils are progressing at a meaningful rate.

Learning is recorded on 'Earwig.' (School assessment tool) Teachers use ipsative assessment, measuring progress against individual pupils own starting point rather than peer performance. We use the progressive stages of the PSHE Association SEND Framework (Encountering, Foundation, Core, Development, Enrichment, Enhancement) to evidence small steps of progress and ensure the quality of learning.

How curriculum and delivery is evaluated

The RSHE Subject Leader meets periodically with staff teaching RSHE to evaluate curriculum needs and the needs and understanding of the pupils.

The RSHE Subject Leader evaluates needs and issues arising from on-going parent/carer consultation activities.