



**St John's**  
School Billericay

# **Relationship and Sex Education Policy**

Date: September 2026  
Those Responsible: Mrs S Revill (KG)  
Mrs J Littlefield (Juniors)  
Mrs E Morgan (Seniors)

To be reviewed: August 2027

## **Relationships and Sex Education Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

This policy reflects the updated government statutory guidance for introduction in September 2026. The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. This statutory obligation extends to independent schools.

The afore-mentioned statutory guidance also makes reference to mandatory Health Education. However, given that independent schools are not bound by this part of the guidance, being instead required to deliver Health Education under Paragraph 2 of the Independent School Standards Regulations, this Policy makes no mention thereof.

### **Key personnel**

Mrs Amy Fleming (Deputy Head)

Mrs Jo Littlefield - Head of Junior School

Mrs Sandra Revill – Head of Kindergarten

Mrs E Morgan – Senior Lead

### **Kindergarten and Juniors:**

**Relationships Education** in Kindergarten and Juniors is defined as teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults.

**Sex Education** is taught in Lower 2, Upper 2 and Lower 3 (Y4, 5 and 6) and is defined as: teaching pupils how a baby is conceived and putting this in the context of the changes to the bodies of males and females that happen at puberty.

### **Seniors:**

**Relationships and Sex Education** in Upper 3 to Upper 5 (Y7-Y11) is defined as: giving pupils the information necessary for them to develop healthy, respectful and loving relationships (including intimate relationships) that help them to flourish, and how to identify and resist unhealthy relationships; delivering information about human sexuality, contraception and sexual health in a fact-based and non-judgemental manner that emphasises the critical importance of consent and mutual respect.

### **The principal aims of RSE at St John's is:**

1. to equip pupils with the knowledge, understanding, criticality and self-awareness necessary to form healthy and positive age-appropriate relationships;
2. to ensure that pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of human reproduction and sexual relationships, including, for older pupils, detailed knowledge of contraception and sexual health.

### **How RSE is delivered:**

Rather than being taught as a separate subject, RSE is embedded into the framework of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) at the School. That said, we believe that RSE should be

set within a wider school context in which values such as respect, fidelity, tolerance and the importance of family are promoted at every opportunity.

The School also recognises that parents have a key role in teaching their children about sex and relationships, and we seek to complement rather than displace this.

In order to create a collaborative learning partnership between the teacher and his/her pupils, RSE is delivered in a fact-based, non-judgemental manner. Teachers of RSE also take care to generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any embarrassment, as well as one where a range of views can, so long as they are expressed maturely and sensitively, be tolerated and respected.

RSE is complemented by, but not delivered through the Science, GCSE Biology and Religious Studies syllabuses, with human reproduction taught in Upper 3, and puberty and contraception taught at GCSE from an exclusively physiological perspective.

### **Subject content of RSE:**

The relevant statutory guidance obliges the School to deliver specific Relationships Education content to its pupils of primary age and specific RSE content to its pupils of secondary age. We also teach pupils in the upper juniors a minimal amount of age-appropriate sex education in addition to that covered by the science curriculum.

The following objectives set out the subject content of Relationships Education and RSE and includes all statutory content.

As with all curriculum subjects, RSE is suitably differentiated so that it is accessible to all pupils, including those with a special educational need or disability (SEND).

### **Subject content for Relationships Education - Kindergarten and Juniors**

Relationships Education in the Kindergarten and Juniors is taught to each class by their Form teachers or other teachers as part of the PSHE syllabus.

Pupils should know...

- that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability.
- the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members,
- the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives.
- that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.
- that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up.
- that marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people- of the same or different sex- to each other which is intended to be lifelong.
- how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.
- how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.

- the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties.
- that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded.
- that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right.
- how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust,
- how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable,
- managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.
- the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs.
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.
- the conventions of courtesy and manners.
- the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness.
- that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority.
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help.
- what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive.
- the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.
- that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not.
- that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous.
- the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them.
- how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met.
- how information and data is shared and used online.
- what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context).
- about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.
- that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact.
- how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know.
- how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult.
- how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard.

- how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
- where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

### **Subject content for Sex Education in the Junior School [N.B. This is not statutory]**

#### **By the end of Lower 3, pupils should know...**

- that the mature male reproductive organs produce sperm and the female ones eggs
- that a baby begins to grow in the womb when a sperm fertilises an egg
- that fertilisation happens when a man and a woman are “happy to share a specially close and loving embrace which allows the sperm to be released from the penis into the vagina”
- the changes, both physical and emotional, that happen at puberty [first covered in L2 but not in the context of sex education]
- strategies for coping successfully with these changes (both emotionally and practically)
- that changes at puberty are linked to being able to have a baby
- that it is natural, as they approach and go through puberty, to begin to “fancy” other people, but also that there is not and should not be any pressure in this respect
- that some people “fancy” people of the same sex

An important part of the programme is the opportunity for pupils freely to ask questions directly related to the subject content in a mature and sensible yet open environment. Aware that children with unanswered questions may turn to inappropriate sources of information, such questions will generally be answered fully by the teacher in front of the whole class. However, when a primary-age pupil asks a question pertaining to sex or sexuality which clearly goes beyond the syllabus or at a point when the sex education syllabus is not being delivered: the child is not made to feel uncomfortable for having asked it; the child is invited to speak to the teacher at the end of the lesson; the teacher uses his/her professional judgement to decide the extent to which he/she will answer the question; the teacher may decide to contact the child’s parents to discuss the matter further. In line with our Safeguarding Policy, if a child exhibits behaviour and/or language that is clearly oversexualised for his/her age, the Designated Safeguarding Lead is informed immediately.

### **Subject content for Relationships and Sex Education in U3-U5 (Y7-Y11)**

RSE in the Senior School forms part of PSHE delivered as a timetabled subject and during form times by the form tutors to mixed-gender form groups.

Sex Education is delivered by visiting professionals or specific senior teachers within the school.

The government guidance states that pupils should be taught:

#### **Families**

1. That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
2. How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children.
3. Why marriage or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples. The legal status of marriage and civil partnership, including that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections that are not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have, for example, undergone a non-legally binding religious ceremony.
4. That ‘common-law marriage’ is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children.
5. That forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 are illegal.<sup>8</sup>

6. How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships.
7. The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the importance of the early years of a child's life for brain development.
8. How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed, including when pupils are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.

### **Respectful relationships**

Curriculum content:

1. The characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, pupils should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, generosity, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships.
2. How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers. Pupils should understand the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and equal.
3. The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others. This includes developing one's own interests, hobbies, friendship groups, and skills. Pupils should understand what it means to be treated with respect by others.
4. What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs.
5. The practical steps pupils can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships. This includes skills for communicating respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict.
6. The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.
7. Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration.
8. The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Pupils should understand that just because someone says yes to doing something, that doesn't automatically make it ethically ok.
9. How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). Pupils should be equipped to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice.
10. How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships. For example, how people who are disempowered can feel they are not entitled to be treated with respect by others or how those who enjoy an unequal amount of power might, with or without realising it, impose their preferences on others.
11. How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviours and by disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing some people with a sense of sexual entitlement to the bodies of others.
12. Pupils should have an opportunity to discuss how some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called "involuntary celibates" (incels) or online influencers.

## **Online safety and awareness**

Curriculum content:

1. Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.
2. Online risks, including the importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect information online. Pupils should also understand the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues.
3. The characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and / or may post things which aren't real / have been created with AI. That social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online.
4. Not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal material which is sent to them. Pupils should understand that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has happened there is no way of controlling where it ends up. Pupils should understand the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images.
5. That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI generated imagery. Pupils should understand the potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. Pupils should know how to seek support and should understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either at school or with the police, if an image of themselves has been shared. Pupils should also understand that sharing indecent images of people over 18 without consent is a crime.
6. What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including personal information, images or videos, and how to manage issues online.
7. About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them.
8. That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons. Pupils should be taught where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Pupils should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong.
9. That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice.
10. How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns.
11. That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours and can negatively affect how people behave towards sexual partners. This can affect pupils who see pornographic content accidentally as well as those who see it deliberately. Pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it.
12. How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.
13. That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (e.g. to enable targeted advertising).

14. That criminals can operate online scams, for example using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion.
15. That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and that these can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice. It is important to be able to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how they might pose a risk.

## **Being Safe**

Curriculum content:

1. How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships (in all contexts, including online) and early sexual relationships that might involve kissing or touching. That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent.
2. That there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from peers or others, including sexual pressure, and how to avoid putting pressure on others.
3. How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe (and recognise this in the relationships of others); how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.
4. How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. Pupils should learn ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. Pupils should understand that there are strategies they can use to increase their safety, and that this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour. Pupils might reflect on the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions.
5. What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it.
6. That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language / attention / touching, taking and/or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting.
7. The concepts and laws relating to sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault.
8. The concepts and laws relating to harmful sexual behaviour, which includes all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people but also includes other forms of concerning behaviour like using age-inappropriate sexual language.
9. The concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour.<sup>10</sup>
10. That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed.
11. The concepts and laws relating to harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation.
12. The concepts and laws relating to forced marriage.
13. The physical and emotional damage which can be caused by female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law around these areas. This should include that it is a criminal offence to perform or assist in the performance of FGM, virginity testing or hymenoplasty, in the UK or abroad, or to fail to protect a person under 16 for whom they are responsible.



14. That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury. That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone's neck or covering someone's mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death.
15. That pornography presents some activities as normal which many people do not and will never engage in, some of which can be emotionally and/or physically harmful.
16. How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced from others, including information on where to report abuse, and where to seek medical attention when required, for example after an assault.

### **Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health**

Curriculum content:

1. That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive.
2. The law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex.
3. Sexual consent and their capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given, as well as the considerations that people might take into account prior to sexual activity, e.g. the law, faith and family values. That kindness and care for others require more than just consent.
4. That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.
5. That some sexual behaviours can be harmful.
6. The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, and signposting towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decision-making.
7. That there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Pupils should be given medically and legally accurate and impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help.
8. How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, are transmitted. How risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use). The use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and how and where to access them. The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma
9. The prevalence of STIs, the short and long term impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
10. How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour.
11. How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms.
12. How to counter misinformation, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further advice, and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

### **How RSE is monitored and evaluated**

As is the case for all subjects, RSE is monitored and evaluated through a combination of Classroom Visits, discussions at staff meetings and management meetings. This monitoring is undertaken by the Senior school lead, the Deputy Head and the Headteacher.

### **Working with parents**

The School consults parents regarding this Policy (see Policy Statement above) as well as taking into consideration the religious backgrounds of pupils.

The School appreciates that sex education is a contentious issue for some in society and that some parents may be concerned about what their child may or may not be taught. The School aims to be transparent about what it does and does not teach to pupils at various ages, together with the reasons why. To this end, parents of Junior pupils are provided with a powerpoint of the content of the puberty talk in advance so that they can make an informed decision. This provides the opportunity for parents to support learning in school by talking to their children about sex education. In the senior school, parents can request a copy of any materials used for RSE.

### **Right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw)**

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education (but not relationships education, which is compulsory for all children in all schools). In practice, very few, if any, parents at St John's exercise this right. Parents who wish to withdraw their child are asked to put their request in writing to the Headteacher. He will then typically invite the parents (and, if appropriate, the child) to talk with him in case he is able to assuage their concerns. However, the School ultimately respects the right of parents, other than in exceptional circumstances, to determine whether or not their child participates in sex education. If a pupil is withdrawn, the School upholds its responsibility to provide him/her with appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. 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.

In line with government guidance, the following applies:

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school should respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.