

Coombeshead Academy

Together we grow, together we achieve



RSE Policy

2026 - 2027

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Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

School Name: Coombeshead Academy

Policy Owner: Jo CHAPPELL Assistant Head Teacher (Personal Development)

Approved By: Governing Board

1. Policy Statement

At Coombeshead Academy, we believe that high-quality Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is an essential part of preparing young people for adult life. Through our curriculum, we aim to equip students with the knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes they need to build positive relationships, make informed decisions, keep themselves safe, and thrive in modern Britain.

Our RSE provision reflects our school values of respect, inclusion, responsibility, integrity and aspiration. It supports students to develop healthy relationships, understand themselves and others, recognise risks, and seek support when needed.

RSE is delivered within a broader Life Skills programme and contributes to our safeguarding responsibilities, equality duties and commitment to promoting student wellbeing.

This policy was produced by Jo CHAPPELL (Assistant Head Teacher & DSL & PSHE Lead) in consultation with parents/carers, colleagues and governors at Coombeshead Academy. It has also been approved by the Education South West Board of Trustees.

2. Statutory Requirements

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- The Department for Education's statutory guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education (2025, implementation from September 2026)
- The Education Act 2002
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Relevant safeguarding legislation and guidance.

As a secondary school, Relationships and Sex Education is compulsory for all students in Years 7–11.

The school also provides age-appropriate RSE for students in the sixth form (Years 12–13) as part of our commitment to preparing young people for adulthood, higher education, employment and independent living.

3. Aims of RSE

The aims of RSE at Coombeshead Academy are to enable students to:

- Develop respectful, healthy and positive relationships;
- Understand the characteristics of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships;
- Recognise and challenge discrimination, prejudice and harmful stereotypes;
- Develop respect for themselves and others;
- Understand consent and personal boundaries;
- Understand sexual health, reproduction and contraception;
- Recognise and manage risk in both offline and online environments;
- Develop critical understanding of media, pornography and online influences;
- Understand issues relating to misogyny, violence against women and girls, and harmful online cultures;
- Know how and where to seek help, advice and support;
- Prepare for adult life, including intimate relationships, parenthood and family life;
- Develop the confidence to make informed and responsible decisions;

We have embedded the DFE's guiding principles for RSE education by ensuring that the objectives are achieved through age and stage appropriate teaching.

4. Guiding Principles

Our RSE programme is:

Pupil-centred

We actively seek student voice when designing, reviewing and evaluating our curriculum.

Inclusive

Teaching reflects the diversity of modern society and promotes respect for all people while complying with equality and safeguarding duties. This includes making adjustments to lesson content to ensure accessibility for all.

Age and Stage Appropriate

Content is carefully sequenced to meet the developmental needs of students and builds progressively from Year 7 to Year 13.

Evidence-Informed

Curriculum content is informed by statutory requirements, safeguarding intelligence, local context and current research.

Safeguarding Focused

RSE contributes directly to our safeguarding curriculum and helps students recognise risks, abuse and exploitation.

5. Curriculum Content

RSE is delivered through the Life Skills curriculum, assemblies, themed days and where appropriate through other curriculum subjects such as science, RPE and PE.

A full curriculum overview of the Life Skills curriculum and the linked curriculum areas is available on the school website.

The curriculum is structured around the following themes:

Relationships

Students learn about:

- Healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Friendship
- Family relationships
- Respect and equality
- Communication skills
- Conflict resolution
- Consent
- Coercive and controlling behaviour
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual violence

- Honour-based abuse and forced marriage
- Peer-on-peer abuse

Sex Education

Students learn about:

- Human reproduction
- Fertility
- Pregnancy
- Birth
- Contraception
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Sexual health services
- Decision-making within intimate relationships

Online Relationships and Safety

Students learn about:

- Digital footprints
- Online relationships
- Sexting and sharing nude images
- Sextortion
- Deepfakes and manipulated content
- Pornography and its impact
- Online grooming
- Social media influences
- Harmful online communities and ideologies

Equality and Diversity

Students learn about:

- Protected characteristics
- Respectful behaviour
- Inclusion
- Challenging discrimination

- Different family structures
- Diversity within society

Violence Against Women and Girls

Students learn about:

- Gender stereotypes
- Misogyny
- Sexual harassment
- Violence against women and girls
- Bystander intervention
- Positive masculinity
- Healthy role models

Sixth Form Preparation for Adulthood

Students in Years 12–13 additionally explore:

- Adult relationships
- Independent living
- Workplace relationships
- Sexual health in adulthood
- Consent in adult contexts
- Financial decision-making within relationships
- Parenting and family life
- Personal safety at university, work and social settings

The effectiveness of our curriculum will be assessed using a range of assessment and feedback mechanisms. Student discussion, responses to scenarios and knowledge checkers will be used to ensure learning outcomes have been achieved. All assessment in Life Skills is low stakes with no formal assessments with the intention of using assessment to understand gaps in knowledge and misconceptions so that these can be easily and quickly rectified to continue the work of keeping children safe.

6. Inclusion

All students are entitled to access RSE.

The school will ensure that:

- Teaching is accessible to all learners.
- Appropriate adaptations are made for students with SEND.
- Resources are suitable for students' age and stage of development.
- Staff create a respectful and inclusive learning environment.
- Students feel safe to ask questions and seek support.

7. Safe Learning Environment

Teachers will establish ground rules to ensure discussions are respectful and productive.

Staff will:

- Use agreed classroom expectations.
- Encourage respectful discussion.
- Challenge misinformation.
- Avoid promoting personal beliefs as fact.
- Respond appropriately to disclosures.
- Follow safeguarding procedures where concerns arise.

Students will be reminded that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if safeguarding concerns are identified.

Students are encouraged to ask questions and engage in discussion during Life Skills lessons. Questions will be answered by teaching staff where appropriate; where a member of staff is unsure of the most accurate or suitable response, the question will be revisited after further consultation or research.

To ensure all students feel comfortable seeking information and clarification, opportunities will be provided for questions to be submitted anonymously. Students are also able to use the school's online Whisper function to ask questions anonymously or raise concerns, ensuring that all learners can access support and information in a way that feels safe and appropriate.

If a student's question goes beyond the sex education covered by the school, or relates to sex education from which they have been withdrawn, the teacher will explain that they cannot answer that question now but they will seek clarification from the PSHE lead and come back to it next lesson. It is the teacher's responsibility to

follow up on this to ensure students continue to develop trusting relationships with staff in school.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Board

The governing board will:

- Approve this policy.
- Monitor compliance with statutory requirements.
- Ensure appropriate resources are available.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure statutory requirements are met.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate training.
- Monitor the quality of provision.

PSHE/RSE Lead

The PSHE/RSE Lead will:

- Develop and review the curriculum.
- Monitor implementation.
- Coordinate staff training.
- Evaluate impact.
- Engage with students, parents and staff.

Teaching Staff

Teaching staff will:

- Deliver the curriculum professionally and objectively.
- Create a safe learning environment.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Contribute to evaluation and improvement.

Students

Students are expected to:

- Participate respectfully.
- Engage positively with learning.

- Follow agreed classroom expectations.

9. Working with Parents and Carers

We recognise parents and carers as the primary educators of their children in many aspects of relationships and sex education.

The school will:

- Share information about curriculum content.
- Publish this policy on the school website.
- Offer opportunities for parental consultation.
- Provide information about resources used in teaching.
- Support parents in discussing sensitive topics at home.
- Make curriculum context available upon request by emailing:
welcome@coombesheadacademy.org.uk

10. Right to Withdraw

Parents/carers have the right to request withdrawal of their child from some or all of the sex education component of RSE.

Parents/carers cannot withdraw their child from:

- Relationships Education.
- Health Education.
- National Curriculum Science.

Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing to the Headteacher. An exemplar form is attached as an annex to this policy.

The Headteacher will meet with parents/carers to discuss the request and ensure they understand the purpose and content of the curriculum.

In accordance with statutory guidance, three terms before a student turns 16, the student may choose to receive sex education regardless of parental wishes.

Alternative educational arrangements will be made for withdrawn students.

11. Staff Training

Staff delivering RSE will receive regular professional development to ensure they:

- Understand statutory requirements.

- Deliver content confidently and accurately.
- Manage sensitive discussions appropriately.
- Respond effectively to safeguarding concerns.
- Promote inclusion and respect.

12. Safeguarding

The RSE policy supports our school's approach to safeguarding and links to other policies set out in Appendix 1 of this document.

Teachers are aware that effective RSE can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue and all staff have been trained on what to do in the event of a disclosure. Teachers will report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Jo Chappell or the SSO Lead, Natalie Beeks.

At times we may use external providers to deliver some content for the delivery of our RSE curriculum. The protocol for inviting external agencies into lessons/learning is that all resources/materials and lesson content will be checked prior to the delivery of content. Visitors will be told what to do if they receive a safeguarding disclosure during the process of delivery which includes reporting to the DSL/DDSL and recording the disclosure in a written format which is dated and signed.

12. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The effectiveness of this policy and the RSE programme will be evaluated through:

- Student voice activities.
- Parent/carer feedback.
- Staff feedback.
- Learning walks and quality assurance.
- Curriculum reviews.
- Safeguarding and behaviour data.
- Governor monitoring.

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation or guidance.

Our curriculum aims to reflect the needs of our local community and will respond proactively to any concerns raised within our community or by our community partners. This will not impact the delivery of our statutory RSE content but it may

mean that the order, timing or focus of key areas of delivery may be adjusted to meet the needs of our student community.

Appendix 1: Linked Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- SEND Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Personal Development Strategy

Appendix 2: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS	
Any other information you would like the school to consider	
Parent signature	

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	
Signature	