



Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

2026 – 2027

Policy owner: Head of School

Approval: Advisory Board

In effect from: 1 September 2026

To be ratified: Advisory Board, December 2026

Next review: August 2027

Version control

Version	Author	Purpose / change	Date	Approval
1.0	SLT	Initial policy	February 2024	Advisory Board
1.1	SLT	Review with minor amendments	September 2024	Advisory Board
2.0	SLT	Re-draft in line with the updated DfE RSHE guidance taking effect 1 September 2026. New statement of intent, summary of key changes, updated curriculum coverage.	25 August 2026	Draft
2.1	SLT	Corrections to the statutory position on withdrawal; new sections on dual-registered and part-time students, Health Education content, publication and related policies; expanded roles and responsibilities; revised withdrawal form.	31 August 2026	In effect from 1 September 2026; to be ratified by the Advisory Board, December 2026

Contents

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1. Statement of intent

Pledge2Learn is an independent special school, registered with the Department for Education and inspected by Ofsted, providing education for students aged 11–16 with a range of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We admit students on a rolling basis, including students with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans and students who are dual registered and attend part time.

We believe that all our students, whatever their needs, have an equal right to high-quality, accessible Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) that keeps them safe, supports their wellbeing, and prepares them for adult life, including relationships, employment and independent or supported living.

RSE at Pledge2Learn is rooted in the belief that understanding relationships, one's own body, consent and personal safety is a fundamental safeguarding entitlement, not an optional extra. For many of our students, explicit, repeated and highly individualised teaching in this area is essential. They may be more vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and mixed messages from peers and online content, and may need longer, more concrete and more frequently repeated teaching to internalise key concepts than their mainstream peers.

This policy sets out our approach to RSE and reflects the Department for Education's (DfE) updated statutory guidance, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, published in July 2025 and taking effect from 1 September 2026 ("the 2026 guidance").

2. Aims

Through our RSE curriculum we aim to enable students to:

- Understand what healthy, respectful relationships look like in families, friendships and, as they mature, intimate relationships, and recognise the difference between these and relationships that are unsafe, unhealthy or abusive.
- Understand and exercise consent, communicate their own boundaries, and recognise and respect the boundaries of others, using language and methods — including symbols, Makaton, social stories or communication aids — matched to their needs.
- Keep themselves safe online and offline, including recognising grooming, sexual exploitation, coercion, and the risks associated with pornography, sharing images and AI-generated sexual content.
- Understand their changing bodies during puberty and develop age- and stage-appropriate knowledge of human reproduction and sexual health, including the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- Recognise and challenge stereotypes, prejudice, sexism and misogyny, and understand the value of diversity, including in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, race and religion.
- Develop self-respect, confidence and empathy, within a positive school culture around relationships and sexuality.
- Know how, when and to whom to report a concern or disclosure, and understand that they will be believed and supported.
- Develop the practical knowledge and self-advocacy skills needed for greater independence in adult life, tailored to each student's identified aspirations and needs as set out in their EHC plan or individual learning plan.

We also aim to provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place safely and constructively.

Our approach is guided by the 2026 guidance's principle that effective teaching should build positive characteristics — resilience, self-worth, self-respect, honesty and kindness — and help students identify and respond to harm, rather than focusing solely on risk.

RSE teaching is underpinned by our GRIT values — Gratitude, Respect, Integrity and Teamwork — in helping young people understand the importance of honest and respectful relationships.

3. Statutory requirements

Relationships Education and RSE are statutory for all students receiving secondary education, under sections 34–35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019. These requirements apply to independent schools. The DfE published updated statutory guidance in July 2025, which becomes mandatory from 1 September 2026.

In teaching RSE we must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State, as set out in section 403 of the Education Act 1996. We must also have regard to:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, Chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010, which applies to us as a provider of education
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, in particular Part 1 (quality of education) and Part 2 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

Health Education is compulsory in maintained schools. It does not formally apply to independent schools, which are instead required to provide personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education under the Independent School Standards. Pledge2Learn follows the health education content of the 2026 guidance as good practice (see section 6.4).

3.1 Summary of key changes introduced by the 2026 guidance

The table below summarises the principal changes between the outgoing 2019 guidance and the 2026 guidance.

Theme	What changes under the 2026 guidance
Misogyny and violence against women and girls (VAWG)	New, explicit expectations that students are taught to recognise and challenge misogyny and to understand the links between sexism, misogyny and violence against women and girls. Staff are directed to challenge harmful ideas expressed by students without shaming the individual.
Positive male role models and healthy masculinity	New content addressing the influence of online ‘manosphere’ and incel-related material, and promoting positive, respectful models of masculinity as a protective factor.
AI, deepfakes and online risk	New content on AI-generated sexual imagery including deepfake nude images, reflecting the criminal law on creating or sharing such material, alongside fake and AI-generated accounts, online scams, how personal data is used, AI chatbots and gambling.

Pornography and online sexual content	Strengthened requirements to address pornography's distorted picture of sex and relationships, including where students are known to have encountered sexual content online, taught in an age- and stage-appropriate way.
Sexual ethics and consent	Expanded content on sexual ethics, healthy sexual relationships and consent, going beyond the legal definition to explore respect, communication and mutual wellbeing.
Image-based abuse and sextortion	New content on sextortion (financial sexual exploitation), non-consensual sharing of intimate images, upskirting and stalking, taught alongside the relevant criminal law.
Sexual health and the law	Updates to sexual health content including HIV prevention medication (PrEP), and the law on virginity testing and on strangulation and suffocation.
Staying safe in public and online spaces	New material on personal safety in public spaces — including travelling and socialising, knife crime and conflict resolution — alongside online safety, harassment and exploitation.
Mental health content	Strengthened mental health content, including suicide prevention taught carefully and with appropriate professional input, self-harm, loneliness, and change, loss and bereavement, while avoiding over-medicalising ordinary emotions.
LGBT+ content	Clearer expectations that content relating to sexual orientation and gender identity is fully integrated across the programme, taught factually and sensitively, rather than as a single stand-alone lesson.
Flexibility on age-based thresholds	Proposals to introduce fixed national age limits for certain topics were not taken forward. Schools retain professional judgement, informed by students' developmental stage, to decide when content is introduced.
Parental engagement and transparency	Reinforced expectation that parents and carers are consulted when the RSE policy and curriculum are developed and reviewed, that the policy is published, and that all teaching materials — including those of external providers — are made available to parents on request.
Whole-school and safeguarding alignment	Explicit expectation that RSE is planned with input from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and any mental health or wellbeing lead, reflecting its role as a core part of preventative safeguarding.

3.2 Applying the 2026 guidance in a special school context

The 2026 guidance confirms that schools retain professional judgement over when specific content is introduced, based on the developmental readiness of their students rather than fixed age thresholds. This is particularly important at Pledge2Learn: students do not automatically progress through this curriculum by chronological age or year group. Content and pace are matched to each student's cognitive, communication, social and emotional development, informed by the SENCo, teachers and, where appropriate, information in the student's EHC plan and the views of any professionals involved in their support.

Where a student's level of understanding means that certain secondary content — for example elements of sex education — would not be meaningful or appropriate at a given time, this is recorded and kept under regular review. It is not used as a reason to withhold core safeguarding content such as consent, privacy, safe and unsafe touch, and how to report abuse, which remains a priority for every student regardless of ability.

3.3 Students who are dual registered or attend part time

A number of our students are dual registered with another school, or attend Pledge2Learn part time. This affects how RSE is planned and recorded.

- On admission we establish with parents or carers, and with the other setting, what RSE the student has already received and what the other setting will continue to provide.
- Where a student is dual registered, we agree in writing with the other setting which elements of RSE each provider delivers, so that coverage is complete and content is neither duplicated nor missed. This is recorded in the student's individual learning plan.
- Where a student attends part time, coverage is planned around their timetable. Core safeguarding content — consent, privacy, safe and unsafe touch, and how to report a concern — is prioritised and delivered regardless of the length or pattern of the placement.
- A request to withdraw from sex education made at another setting does not automatically apply at Pledge2Learn. We check the position with parents or carers and the other setting on admission and record the outcome using the form at Appendix 1.
- With the knowledge of parents or carers, and in line with our data protection obligations, we share information with the other setting about what has been taught and any concerns arising.

4. Policy development, consultation and publication

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students and parents and carers. The consultation and development process involved the following steps:

1. Review — a working group drew together all relevant information, including national statutory guidance and local guidance.
2. Staff consultation — all school staff were given the opportunity to read the policy and make recommendations.
3. Parent and carer consultation — because of the small numbers on roll and rolling admissions, consultation takes place on an individual basis as students are admitted, and all parents and carers are invited to comment on the policy at each annual review.
4. Student consultation — discussions with students identified the key issues the curriculum needs to cover to support their positive development.
5. Local risk — we take account of the specific risks to young people in our community identified through local multi-agency arrangements, including CMARS [confirm full title], particularly in relation to child sexual exploitation.
6. Ratification — the policy will be shared with the Advisory Board and ratified at the next board meeting in December 2026.

This policy is published on the school website and a paper copy is available free of charge to any parent or carer on request. Where we plan to depart from the published policy in any material way, we will notify parents and carers in advance.

5. Definitions

- Relationships Education: teaching about healthy, respectful relationships of all kinds — families, friendships and online relationships — and how to recognise and respond to unhealthy or unsafe relationships. Relationships Education is compulsory for all students and there is no right to withdraw from it.
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE): at secondary age, Relationships Education is extended to include sex education — human reproduction, sexual health, contraception and intimate relationships — taught factually and appropriately to each student's stage of development. RSE is statutory. Parents and carers have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from the sex education elements only (see section 9).
- Health Education: covers physical health and mental wellbeing, including puberty, healthy lifestyles and where to seek help. Health Education does not formally apply to independent schools, but Pledge2Learn follows it as good practice and to meet the Independent School Standards relating to students' personal development.
- PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education): the broader subject area within which RSE and Health Education sit at this school, alongside economic wellbeing, careers and preparation for adulthood.

6. Curriculum content and delivery

6.1 Delivery

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents and carers, students and staff, taking into account the age, developmental stage, needs and feelings of our students.

RSE is delivered through discrete, timetabled PSHE and RSE lessons, supplemented by planned opportunities across the wider curriculum — for example in science, physical education, religious education and tutor time — and responsively, when issues arise naturally. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum.

Content builds cumulatively and is revisited regularly, reflecting the evidence that students with SEND often need significant repetition and over-learning to retain and generalise personal safety concepts.

We will share all curriculum materials with parents and carers on request, including materials produced by external providers. We do not enter into agreements with providers that would prevent us from sharing their materials with parents and carers.

6.2 Curriculum coverage (by the end of secondary education)

In line with the 2026 guidance, by the time they leave our school — allowing for individual starting points and rates of progress — students will have covered age- and stage-appropriate content on the following.

Families and committed relationships

- Different types of family and committed relationship, and what makes them stable and happy.
- The roles and responsibilities of parents and carers in raising children, including adolescent brain development and what children need.
- How to judge whether a relationship is safe or unsafe, and how to seek help.

Respectful relationships and friendships

- The characteristics of healthy friendships: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, boundaries, privacy and consent.
- How stereotypes — including those based on sex, gender, disability, race, religion or sexual orientation — can cause harm, including how they can normalise non-consensual behaviour.
- Recognising and challenging everyday sexism and misogyny, and understanding at an appropriate level the links between these and violence against women and girls.
- Bullying, including cyberbullying, and how and where to get help.
- That some behaviour in relationships is criminal, including coercive and controlling behaviour, stalking and sexual harassment.

Online and media

- Rights, responsibilities and safe behaviour online, including that expectations of behaviour are the same online as offline.
- Recognising fake and AI-generated accounts, online scams, exaggerated and extreme language online, how personal data is used, and the risks associated with AI chatbots and with gambling.
- The risks of sharing images, the permanence of material shared online, and how to seek support or report concerns.
- That sexually explicit material presents a distorted view of relationships and sex, and how it influences expectations and behaviour.
- The risks of AI-generated sexual imagery, including deepfake nude images, and that creating or sharing such images of a real person, or of a child, is a criminal offence.

Being safe

- The concept of consent and how it is communicated, sought and withdrawn, including for students who use alternative or augmentative communication.
- Grooming, sexual exploitation, abuse, coercion, harassment, so-called honour-based abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation, and where to get help.
- Sextortion (financial sexual exploitation), the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, upskirting and stalking, and how to report them.
- Recognising and resisting criminal exploitation, including county lines.
- Personal safety in public spaces as well as online, including when travelling and socialising, knife crime and conflict resolution, fire safety, and safety around roads, railways and water.

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

- The characteristics of healthy intimate relationships: mutual respect, consent, loyalty and trust.
- Puberty, human reproduction and how bodies change, taught with reference to individual readiness.
- Contraception, sexually transmitted infections, HIV prevention medication (PrEP), and how to access confidential sexual health advice — taught factually and without judgement to those students for whom this is developmentally appropriate.
- That strangulation and suffocation are dangerous and that non-fatal strangulation is a criminal offence, regardless of whether consent is claimed.

- Strategies for resisting pressure, and understanding that students have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.

Sexual ethics, positive masculinity and healthy relationship role models

- Respectful, ethical approaches to sex and relationships that go beyond the legal definition of consent.
- Positive, respectful models of masculinity, and challenging the influence of harmful online content and incel subcultures, at a level appropriate to students' understanding.
- The importance of positive role models in and out of school, and that victims of harassment or abuse are never to blame.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care that no student is stigmatised because of their home circumstances. Families can include single-parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster carers, among other structures, and some students may have a different structure of support around them — for example looked-after children and young carers.

We are also mindful of the law, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal activity such as violence against people, criminal damage, hate crime, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs.

6.3 Relevant legal provisions taught alongside topics

Consistent with the 2026 guidance, we make students aware of the relevant law when related topics are taught, in accessible, plain-language terms. This includes:

- The age of consent, and the legal definitions of rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment
- The law on sexting and the sharing of indecent images, including self-generated images of under-18s
- Upskirting, the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, and the creation or sharing of sexually explicit deepfake images
- Stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and so-called honour-based abuse
- Non-fatal strangulation and suffocation
- Virginity testing and hymenoplasty
- Female genital mutilation and forced marriage
- Pornography, hate crime, and offences relating to knives and offensive weapons

6.4 Health Education content

Although Health Education is not formally statutory for independent schools, we follow the health education content of the 2026 guidance as good practice and as part of our PSHE provision under the Independent School Standards. Content includes:

- Mental wellbeing, including managing emotions, resilience, loneliness, and change, loss and bereavement, while avoiding treating ordinary feelings as though they were mental illness
- Self-harm and suicide prevention, taught carefully, without graphic detail, and with appropriate input from trained professionals
- Physical health and fitness, including healthy eating, sleep, personal hygiene, oral health and the importance of routine health checks

- The risks of drugs, alcohol and tobacco, and of vaping, including nicotine addiction and misleading marketing
- Basic first aid
- Puberty and the changing adolescent body
- Preparing for adulthood, including accessing healthcare independently, careers and community life

Where any of this content is likely to be difficult for an individual student because of their history or circumstances, we agree an approach with the DSL and, where appropriate, with parents or carers in advance.

6.5 Inclusivity

We teach these topics in a way that considers how a diverse range of students will relate to them, is sensitive to all students' experiences, and helps students feel safe, supported and able to engage with the key messages.

We also:

- Make sure students learn about these topics in an environment that is appropriate for them, for example in small groups, targeted sessions or one-to-one discussions
- Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation and adaptation needed

This policy is written in line with the Equality Act 2010. We do not discriminate against students on the basis of any protected characteristic, and we make reasonable adjustments to ensure RSE is accessible to every student, regardless of the nature or complexity of their SEND.

In line with the 2026 guidance, content relating to sexual orientation and gender identity is integrated naturally throughout the RSE programme — for example when teaching about families, friendships and relationships — rather than delivered as a single stand-alone lesson. Students are taught to understand the law and to treat all people with respect and tolerance. Faith and other perspectives on these issues may be explored within religious education or similar subjects.

We recognise that some students — including some LGBT+ students, some students exploring their gender identity, and some students from particular cultural or faith backgrounds — may need additional sensitivity, privacy and individual support. Staff are alert to this and signpost students to appropriate support within and, where needed, outside school. Where a student raises questions about gender, staff follow the school's approach set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and take advice from the DSL.

6.6 Use of resources

We will consider whether any resource we plan to use:

- Is aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support students in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Is appropriate to the age, developmental stage and background of our students
- Is evidence-based and contains robust facts and statistics
- Fits into our curriculum plan and comes from a credible source
- Is compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Is sensitive to students' experiences and will not provoke avoidable distress

- Can be shared openly with parents and carers on request

6.7 Responding to students' questions

Students will ask questions, and some will fall outside the planned content. Staff answer questions honestly and factually within the ground rules agreed for the lesson. Where a question is better handled individually, staff will say so and follow it up outside the group. Where a question suggests a safeguarding concern, staff report it to the DSL immediately. Where a question falls outside the scope of this policy, staff will consult the Lead Teacher and, where appropriate, the student's parents or carers before responding, so that students are properly informed rather than seeking answers online.

7. Use of external organisations and materials

We will make sure that any agency and any materials used are appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality. The school remains responsible for what is said to students. This includes making sure that any speakers, tools and resources do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We will:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure their approach to teaching RSE is balanced, and that the resources they intend to use are appropriate to students' age and developmental stage and comply with this policy, the Teachers' Standards, the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Education Act 1996
- Only work with external agencies where we have full confidence in the agency, its approach and its resources
- Make sure any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum
- Review case study materials and seek feedback from others the agency has worked with
- Be clear on what the agency will say and its position on the issues to be discussed
- Ask to see in advance any materials the agency may use, and only use providers who agree that those materials may be shared with parents and carers
- Know the named individuals who will attend and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for them, including checks and identity verification
- Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to us, or to parents and carers
- Check the agency's protocol for taking photographs or using any personal data obtained from a session
- Remind teachers that they can decline a resource or, in extreme cases, stop a session
- Make sure a member of school staff is present throughout any session with an external speaker, and that the speaker is never left unsupervised with students
- Share all external materials with parents and carers on request

We will not, under any circumstances, work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions, or use materials produced by such agencies even where the material itself is not extreme.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The Proprietor Body

Holds ultimate responsibility for compliance with the Independent School Standards and for the school's statutory duties in relation to RSE. Receives assurance from the Advisory Board that this policy is implemented and reviewed. Chair of the Proprietor Body: Patrick Lappin.

8.2 The Advisory Board

Approves this policy; assures itself that the school meets its statutory duties and the Independent School Standards; holds leaders to account for the quality and safety of RSE provision; and assures itself that parents and carers have been consulted. Chair of the Advisory Board: Richard Giles. Advisory Board member with safeguarding responsibility: Ellen Chant.

8.3 The Head of School

Has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for ensuring RSE is taught to a high standard, is accessible to all students and is monitored; ensures staff receive appropriate training; and determines requests for withdrawal from sex education. Head of School: Holly Dickinson.

8.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead

Advises on the safeguarding content of the RSE curriculum in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026; ensures staff know how to respond to disclosures made during RSE lessons; and reviews this policy for alignment with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. DSL: Emma Gill.

8.5 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and Online Safety Lead

Advises on the online safety content of the RSE curriculum, including AI, deepfakes, image-based abuse and sextortion; ensures teaching reflects current online risks and the school's filtering and monitoring arrangements; and deputises for the DSL. Deputy DSL and Online Safety Lead: Callum Cutillo.

8.6 Lead Teacher

Plans and sequences the RSE curriculum; selects and quality-assures resources; supports and monitors delivery; maintains the curriculum map; and coordinates coverage for students who are dual registered or attend part time. Lead Teacher: [insert name].

8.7 SENCo

Advises on individual students' communication, cognition and sensory needs; ensures RSE targets, where relevant, are reflected in EHC plans and student passports; and supports transition and preparation for adulthood planning. SENCo: [insert name].

8.8 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE sensitively, using approaches suited to individual students' needs
- Adapting materials, pacing and communication methods

- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress and responding to the needs of individual students
- Maintaining professional boundaries
- Following safeguarding procedures and reporting concerns to the DSL immediately
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents or carers have requested withdrawal from sex education

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Head of School.

8.9 Students

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

9. Parents' right to request withdrawal from sex education

Relationships Education is compulsory for all students and there is no right to withdraw from it. There is also no right to withdraw a student from Health Education or PSHE, or from content in the science curriculum covering human development and reproduction.

Parents and carers have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered within RSE. The following applies:

- Requests should be made in writing using the form at Appendix 1 and addressed to the Head of School.
- Before a decision is made, the Head of School will meet the parent or carer to explain what is covered and when, the benefits of the teaching, the possible effects of withdrawal — including the social and emotional effects of being excluded and the likelihood that the student will hear a peer's version of the content rather than the teacher's — and how those effects might be mitigated. The discussion is recorded on the form at Appendix 1.
- A request will be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example where there is a safeguarding concern or the student has a specific vulnerability that makes the teaching particularly important for them. Where a request is not granted, the Head of School will confirm the decision and the reasons for it in writing.
- A student who is withdrawn receives purposeful, supervised alternative education during those lessons. They are not left unsupervised or given unrelated work.
- The right to request withdrawal applies up to three terms before the student's sixteenth birthday. From that point, if the student wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will arrange this in one of the three terms before they turn 16. Both the student and their parents or carers are informed of this right when that point is reached, and the date is recorded at Part 4 of the form at Appendix 1.
- A request remains in place until it is withdrawn by the parent or carer, or until the three-term point above is reached. Parents and carers may change their decision at any time by contacting the Head of School.
- Where a student is dual registered, we confirm the position with the other setting and with parents or carers, as set out in section 3.3.

A copy of each withdrawal request and the record of the decision is placed on the student's educational record and retained in line with the school's Records Management and Data Protection Policy. Requests are logged and reviewed at least annually, and reported in summary to the Advisory Board.

10. Safeguarding, confidentiality and responding to disclosures

RSE lessons can prompt students to disclose that they are being, or have been, harmed, abused or exploited, or to disclose other sensitive information. All staff delivering RSE:

- Follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and report any concern or disclosure to the DSL or a deputy immediately, recording it on MyConcern in line with normal procedures
- Do not promise students absolute confidentiality; students are told, in a way appropriate to their understanding, that staff may need to share information to keep them or others safe
- Establish clear ground rules before sensitive lessons — for example, that personal questions will be answered outside the group, and that staff cannot keep secrets that relate to safety
- Use distancing techniques to help students explore sensitive issues without needing to disclose personal experience in front of the group, while remaining alert to genuine disclosures
- Are aware that students with SEND may disclose abuse differently from their peers — for example through behaviour, distress, regression or repetitive re-enactment — rather than through verbal disclosure, and that such indicators are taken as seriously as a verbal account

Any visiting speaker or external provider contributing to RSE is briefed on these safeguarding expectations in advance and is never left unsupervised with students.

11. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction, and RSE is included in our continuing professional development calendar. Training covers the 2026 guidance, the new content areas, handling sensitive topics and difficult questions, and responding to disclosures.

The Head of School may also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE. Training on suicide prevention and self-harm content is completed before that content is delivered.

Training is recorded on the school's central training log.

12. Monitoring, review and approval

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Lead Teacher through lesson visits, work sampling, planning scrutiny and student voice.

Students' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head of School and the Lead Teacher, with input from the DSL, and is reviewed earlier if statutory guidance changes. At each review, parents and carers, students and staff are invited to comment. The policy is then submitted to the Advisory Board for approval, and the Proprietor Body is assured that this has taken place.

This version takes effect on 1 September 2026, in line with the date on which the 2026 guidance becomes mandatory. It will be shared with the Advisory Board and ratified at the next board meeting in December 2026. Next scheduled review: August 2027.

13. Related policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Bullying Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- SEND Policy
- Feedback and Complaints Policy
- Records Management and Data Protection Policy

Appendix 1: Request to withdraw a student from sex education within RSE

Please complete Parts 1 and 2 and return this form to the Head of School, Pledge2Learn, or by email to holly@pledge2learn.co.uk. The Head of School will contact you to arrange a discussion before a decision is made. Parts 3 and 4 are completed by the school.

This form applies only to sex education delivered within RSE. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education, Health Education or PSHE, or from science or other curriculum content covering human development and reproduction.

Part 1 — Student and parent/carers details

Student name	
Date of birth	
Year group / Key Stage	
Dual registered? If yes, name of other setting	
Name of parent/carers	
Relationship to student	
Contact telephone	
Contact email	

Part 2 — Your request

Which elements of sex education do you wish your child to be withdrawn from? (Tick one)	
☐ All sex education delivered within RSE	
☐ Specific topics only — please list below:	
Reason for the request	
Any other information you would like the school to consider	
Signature of parent/carers	
Date	

Part 3 — School use: discussion and decision

Date request received	
Date of discussion with parent/carers	
Attendees at discussion	
Key points of the discussion, including what was explained about content, sequencing, the benefits of the teaching and the possible effects of withdrawal	
Decision (tick one)	
☐ Request granted in full ☐ Request granted in part — details below ☐ Request refused (exceptional circumstances) — reasons below, confirmed to parent/carers in writing	
Lessons or topics from which the student is withdrawn, and dates	
Purposeful alternative education to be provided during those lessons	
Where the student is dual registered: position agreed with the other setting	
Signed (Head of School)	
Date	

Part 4 — School use: opt-in point and review

A student may choose to receive sex education from three terms before their sixteenth birthday, even where a parental request for withdrawal is in place. The school must arrange this if the student wishes it.

Student's sixteenth birthday	
Date three terms before that birthday	
Date parent/carer informed of the opt-in right	
Date student informed of the opt-in right	
Student's decision at that point, and action taken	
Review date for this request	
Recorded on student file by	

Retain the completed form on the student's educational record in line with the Pledge2Learn Records Management and Data Protection Policy.