Arthur Terry Learning Partnership

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ATLP RSE and Health Education Policy (Primary)



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Summary of material changes	Updated to include key changes to statutory guidance Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education 2025, including the new statutory content to be taught from September 2026. **Key changes:** • **Knowledge, skills and application** – greater emphasis on applying learning in real-life situations and making safe, informed and responsible decisions. • Mental wellbeing – expanded content and stronger emphasis on emotional wellbeing, resilience and mental health. • Online wellbeing and safety – expanded content addressing healthy technology use, harmful online content, misinformation and emerging technologies. • Personal safety – greater emphasis on recognising risk, managing personal safety, seeking help and keeping safe.	

	• Healthy relationships and prevention of harm – stronger focus on healthy relationships, personal boundaries, harmful sexual behaviour and preventing abuse. • Family diversity and inclusion – reaffirmed expectations regarding family diversity, belonging, respect and inclusion. • Teaching about equality and the law – strengthened expectations relating to protected characteristics, rights, responsibilities and legal protections. • Parental engagement and transparency – stronger expectations regarding consultation, transparency and access to curriculum materials. Further details of curriculum changes are set out in appendices.

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Statement of intent

At the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership, we recognise the transformational impact that high-quality RSHE can have. It enables pupils to make informed choices about their safety and well-being, develop their talents and interests and thrive academically and personally. This is particularly important for pupils who face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, including those with SEND. RSHE is therefore an essential element of our safeguarding curriculum.

This policy sets out the framework for our relationships, sex and health curriculum, providing clarity on how it is informed, organised and delivered.

Relationships education focuses on giving pupils the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships, and to build their self-efficacy. Health education focuses on equipping pupils with the knowledge they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing. Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools, but we recommend that primaries teach sex education in years 5 and/or 6, in line with content about conception and birth, which forms part of the national curriculum for science.

We also recognise the different contexts of our schools. Primary schools should consult parents about the content of anything that will be taught within sex education. This process should include offering parents support in talking to their children about sex education and how to link this with what is being taught in school as well as advice about parents' right to request withdrawal from sex education. In all cases we will ensure that parents understand the importance of effective RSHE in promoting and protecting the wellbeing of all children, but especially those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable.

For the purpose of this policy, the term parents refers to parents and carers. The term headteacher refers to heads of school also.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Section 80A of the Education Act 2002
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Equality Act 2010
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance (2025)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 Years
- Prevent Duty guidance

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board is responsible for fulfilling its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes
- curriculum content and teaching materials are aligned with this statutory guidance
- teaching is accessible to all pupils with SEND

- clear information is provided for parents and carers on the subject content, teaching materials and external providers, and the right to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education
- the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations

The headteacher is responsible for:

- the overall implementation of this policy
- ensuring staff are suitably trained to deliver the subjects
- making sure that subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures the school can fulfil its legal obligations
- ensuring that parents/carers are fully informed of this policy including subject content
- reviewing requests from parents/carers to withdraw their children from RSHE lessons
- discussing requests for withdrawal with parents/carers
- organising alternative education for pupils who have been withdrawn from sex education, that is appropriate and purposeful
- ensuring that pupils who are educated in alternative provision or through off-site direction receive appropriate, high-quality RSHE provision
- ensuring that pupils are consulted and their views taken account of, to ensure that the programme meets their needs
- reporting to the Trust Board on the effectiveness of this policy.

The relationships, sex and health education subject leader is responsible for:

- implementation of the curriculum
- overseeing the delivery of the subjects, ensuring the subjects are age-appropriate and high-quality
- ensuring teachers are provided with adequate resources and training to support teaching of the subjects
- ensuring the school meets its statutory requirements in relation to the relationships, sex and health curriculum
- ensuring the relationships, sex and health curriculum is inclusive and accessible for all pupils
- working with other subject leaders to ensure the relationships, sex and health curriculum complements, but does not duplicate, the content covered in the national curriculum
- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the subjects and providing reports to the headteacher.
- reviewing the curriculum on a regular basis.

The appropriate teachers are responsible for:

- delivering a high-quality and age-appropriate relationships, sex and health curriculum in line with statutory requirements
- using a variety of teaching methods and resources to provide an engaging curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils
- ensuring they do not express personal views or beliefs when delivering the programme
- modelling positive attitudes to relationships, sex and health education
- responding to any safeguarding concerns in line with the child protection and safeguarding policy
- acting in accordance with planning, monitoring and assessment requirements for the subjects
- liaising with the SENDCO to identify and respond to individual needs of pupils with SEND
- working with the relationships, sex and health education subject leader to evaluate the quality of provision.

The SENDCO is responsible for:

- advising teaching staff how best to identify and support pupils' individual needs
- advising staff on the use of TAs to meet pupils' individual needs.

3. Guiding principles

For the purpose of this policy, relationships and sex education is defined as teaching pupils about healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online, as well as developing an understanding of human sexuality.

For the purpose of this policy, health education is defined as teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing, focusing on recognising the link between the two and being able to make healthy lifestyle choices.

ATLP schools develop their relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) curriculum in line with the following principles:

- **Engagement with pupils** – RSHE is inclusive and well sequenced, informed by meaningful engagement with pupils to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and engaging.
- **Engagement and transparency with parents/carers** – parents and carers are engaged on the content of RSHE and are given full access to all materials used. They are informed of sex education content in advance and reminded of their right to request withdrawal, as set out in law.
- **Positivity** – teaching builds positive attitudes and skills, promotes healthy norms about relationships and health, and avoids language that could normalise harmful behaviour or stigmatise pupils.
- **Careful sequencing** – statutory content is taught progressively, so that pupils are supported to develop the knowledge and skills they need before they encounter different experiences, and to prevent harm.
- **Relevant and responsive** – the curriculum is tailored to pupils' age and stage, informed by local safeguarding context, and accessible to all.
- **Skilled and participative delivery** – RSHE is delivered by staff with the knowledge and confidence to create a safe environment and support interactive, participative learning.
- **Whole-school approach** – RSHE is embedded in the wider culture and ethos of the school, consistent with safeguarding, behaviour and wellbeing policies.

4. Consultation with parents and carers

The school recognises the important role of parents in supporting their children's understanding of relationships, sex and health. The school will consult parents and carers on the development and review of its RSHE policy and will take account of their views. However, responsibility for determining the curriculum remains with the school and parents do not have a right to veto curriculum content.

Parents will be:

- provided with clear information about curriculum content, including what is taught, when it is taught and their right to request withdrawal from sex education;
- when needed, supported in managing conversations with their children about RSHE topics;
- invited to engage with the curriculum through information sessions and opportunities to discuss content, ask questions and raise concerns;
- able to view a representative sample of resources used in lessons and, on request, access the materials used to teach RSHE;
- supported to understand how RSHE contributes to pupils' wellbeing, safety and preparation for adult life, including guidance on how to continue conversations at home.

The school will:

- proactively engage parents and carers through information sessions and opportunities to discuss the curriculum, ask questions, raise concerns and understand its importance for pupils' wellbeing and safety;
- respond positively to requests from parents to view materials;
- ensure that any use of external providers does not restrict the school's ability to share RSHE content with parents.

5. Right to withdraw

- RSHE is a key component of how pupils learn to keep themselves safe, including in future relationships.
- Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from relationships education, health education or content taught as part of the national curriculum for science, including teaching about puberty and human reproduction where required by the science curriculum.
- Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all non-statutory sex education delivered by the school.
- The headteacher will discuss any request with the parent and, where appropriate, the pupil, to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum and to ensure that parents understand the content from which withdrawal is requested. Requests to withdraw pupils from sex education, other than content taught as part of the science curriculum, will be granted.
- The school will keep a record of discussions relating to withdrawal requests and will confirm any agreed arrangements in writing.
- Where a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, the school will ensure that appropriate and purposeful alternative education is provided.

6. Relationships education

See Annexe 1 for detailed curriculum coverage, including new content to be taught from September 2026.

- Relationships education will focus on developing the knowledge, understanding and skills that form the foundations of healthy, positive and respectful relationships. Through the curriculum, pupils will learn how to treat others with kindness and respect, develop positive friendships, and keep themselves and others safe.
- The curriculum will be carefully sequenced so that knowledge and skills build progressively over time, preparing pupils for the more complex relationships, health and wellbeing content taught in secondary education.
- Teaching will recognise and positively reflect the diversity of family life. Pupils will learn that families can take many forms and that loving, supportive relationships are what matter most. Care will be taken to ensure that no pupil feels excluded, stigmatised or disadvantaged because of their family circumstances.
- Relationships education will help pupils to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships and behaviours, understand personal boundaries, privacy and consent, and develop an age-appropriate understanding of their rights over their own bodies and personal information.
- Pupils will learn how to recognise, avoid and report abuse, including emotional, physical and sexual abuse, as well as online risks and harms. Teaching will make clear that abuse is never the fault of the child and that help is available.
- Pupils will be taught how to seek help, report concerns and identify trusted adults who can support them when they feel worried, unsafe or uncomfortable.

- Teaching about safeguarding, risk and online safety will be age-appropriate, proportionate and sensitive to pupils' needs. Protective and preventative content will be introduced in a way that informs and empowers pupils without causing unnecessary alarm or normalising harmful behaviours.
- Where schools identify a need to address emerging issues that are not included within the planned curriculum, they will ensure that teaching remains age-appropriate and sensitive to pupils' experiences and understanding. Parents will be informed in advance of any significant deviation from the published curriculum and relevant materials will be made available on request.

7. Sex education

- RSHE is a key component of how pupils learn to keep themselves safe, including in future relationships.
- Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from relationships education, health education or content taught as part of the national curriculum for science, including teaching about puberty and human reproduction where required by the science curriculum.
- Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all non-statutory sex education delivered by the school.
- The headteacher will discuss any request with the parent and, where appropriate, the pupil, to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum and to ensure that parents understand the content from which withdrawal is requested. Requests to withdraw pupils from sex education, other than content taught as part of the science curriculum, will be granted.
- The school will keep a record of discussions relating to withdrawal requests and will confirm any agreed arrangements in writing.
- Where a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, the school will ensure that appropriate and purposeful alternative education is provided.

8. Health education

See Annexe 1 for detailed curriculum coverage, including new content to be taught from September 2026.

- Health education in primary starts with the benefits and importance of physical activity, good nutrition and sufficient sleep, and supports pupils to develop emotional awareness.
- Schools will emphasise the relationships between physical health and mental wellbeing, and the benefits of physical activity and time spent outdoors.
- As in all of RSHE, care should be taken to avoid exposing pupils to concepts which are not appropriate for them.

9. Curriculum and teaching

9.1 Curriculum design

- The school will provide a planned, age-appropriate and developmentally sequenced RSHE curriculum that meets statutory requirements and reflects the needs of its pupils. The curriculum will be underpinned by the principles of high-quality curriculum design and implementation, building on pupils' prior knowledge and experiences, developing knowledge and skills sequentially, and providing regular opportunities for retrieval, practice and application.

- The majority of the RSHE curriculum will be delivered through the school's PSHE programme, although aspects may be delivered through other curriculum areas, assemblies, enrichment activities and pastoral provision where appropriate.
- The RSHE lead will work with colleagues across the curriculum to ensure learning is coherent, complementary and avoids unnecessary duplication.
- Opportunities will be identified across subjects to reinforce and apply key RSHE concepts, including relationships, respect, equality, wellbeing and safeguarding.

9.2 Teaching

Teaching will follow the principles of ATLP's 'Excellence in Teaching' guide and:

- break down core knowledge and skills into well-sequenced and manageable units of learning;
- ensure that pupils revisit and strengthen prior learning over time;
- provide opportunities for pupils to practise and apply knowledge and skills in relevant and realistic contexts;
- use assessment and feedback to identify pupils' progress, misconceptions and additional support needs;
- maintain high expectations for all pupils and adapt teaching appropriately to ensure that pupils with SEND and other vulnerabilities can access, understand and engage successfully with the curriculum;
- use age-appropriate, evidence-informed resources and approaches that are regularly reviewed by the RSHE lead;
- comply with statutory duties, including those arising from the Equality Act 2010 and safeguarding legislation;
- create an environment in which sensitive issues can be discussed respectfully, honestly and safely;
- challenge prejudice, discrimination, harmful stereotypes and bullying, including those related to protected characteristics; and
- support pupils to develop positive personal characteristics such as resilience, integrity, kindness, self-respect, respect for others and responsible decision-making.

9.3 Curriculum impact

The curriculum is intended to ensure that all pupils, particularly those who face barriers to learning or wellbeing:

- develop secure and detailed knowledge and understanding of relationships, health, safety and wellbeing;
- understand how to form, maintain and recognise healthy relationships;
- know how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy;
- understand and respect the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010;
- recognise, avoid and report risks to their safety and wellbeing, including abuse, exploitation, harmful online content, domestic abuse, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, substance misuse, gang involvement, radicalisation and extremism;
- know how and where to seek help for themselves or others; and
- are prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

10. Working with external experts

- External experts and organisations may be invited to contribute to the delivery of the RSHE curriculum where this enhances pupils' learning through specialist knowledge, expertise or experience. The use of external providers is intended to complement, rather than replace, the curriculum delivered by school staff.
- Schools will remain responsible for the content, quality and appropriateness of all teaching delivered as part of the RSHE curriculum, including any content delivered by external providers.
- Before any external provider is engaged, the school will:
    - check the credentials, suitability and expertise of the individual or organisation
    - review lesson plans, resources and materials in advance;
    - ensure that content is accurate, evidence-informed, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and accessible to all pupils, including those with SEND and other barriers to learning and wellbeing
    - ensure that materials are consistent with the school's curriculum, this policy and relevant statutory guidance;
    - ensure that resources are balanced, do not promote harmful products or behaviours, and do not present partisan views on contested issues as fact;
    - ensure that materials are sensitive to pupils' needs, backgrounds and experiences;
    - ensure that parents can view materials on request in accordance with the school's commitment to openness and transparency; and
    - agree procedures for confidentiality, safeguarding and the management of disclosures.
- External contributions will be integrated into the planned curriculum and will support, rather than duplicate, learning that takes place through RSHE and related curriculum subjects.
- Where external providers are used, they will be expected to comply with the school's safeguarding procedures, including the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and to understand their responsibilities should a safeguarding concern arise.

11. Teaching about the law

- The school will ensure that relationships and health education is taught in a factual and age-appropriate manner so that pupils develop an understanding of their rights, responsibilities and protections under the law.
- Where relevant to the curriculum being taught, pupils will learn about laws and rules that help to keep people safe, healthy and free from harm. This will include learning about equality, respect, personal boundaries, consent, bullying, discrimination, abuse, online safety and seeking help from trusted adults.
- Teaching will help pupils understand that everyone has rights and responsibilities, that some behaviours are unlawful because they cause harm to others, and that the law provides protection for children and adults. Pupils will also develop an understanding of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010 and why these protections exist.
- Teaching will be age-appropriate, factual and sensitive to pupils' needs and experiences and will reflect current legislation and statutory guidance as appropriate. This may include:

    - Marriage, including that forced marriage is wrong and against the law.
    - Consent and permission in age-appropriate ways, including personal boundaries, privacy and respecting the rights of others.
    - Female genital mutilation (FGM), including that it is illegal and a form of abuse.
    - Online behaviour and safety, including the safe use of technology, sharing information online, and recognising when online behaviour is unsafe or unlawful.

- The protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, taught in an age-appropriate way.
- The risks associated with smoking, vaping, alcohol and drugs, and the laws that help keep people safe.
- Extremism and radicalisation, taught in an age-appropriate way as part of keeping safe and recognising harmful influences.
- The age of criminal responsibility, taught in an age-appropriate way.

12. Equality and accessibility

- Schools will deliver relationships and health education in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty. Teaching will be planned and delivered in a way that promotes equality, respect and inclusion and does not discriminate against, harass or victimise pupils.
- Through the curriculum, pupils will develop an understanding of fairness, kindness, respect and the value of diversity. They will learn that people may have different backgrounds, experiences, beliefs and family circumstances, and that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect.
- Pupils will develop an age-appropriate understanding of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010 and why these protections exist. They will learn that the law protects people from discrimination and promotes equality, fairness and respect for all.
- Schools will make reasonable adjustments, where appropriate, to ensure that all pupils can access and benefit from the curriculum. Teaching will be adapted to meet pupils' individual needs and will support all pupils, particularly those who face barriers to learning and wellbeing, to participate fully and achieve the intended outcomes of the curriculum.

13. Family Diversity

- Relationships education will reflect the diversity of modern society and recognise that families can take many forms, including families headed by single parents, grandparents, kinship carers, foster carers, adoptive parents and same-sex parents.
- Pupils will learn that people and families may have different backgrounds, experiences, beliefs and family circumstances, and that loving, supportive relationships provide the foundations for children's wellbeing.
- Care will be taken to ensure that no pupil feels excluded, stigmatised or disadvantaged because of their family circumstances.
- Teaching will encourage pupils to express their views respectfully, listen to the views of others and engage positively with difference.
- The school will challenge prejudice, stereotypes, discriminatory language and bullying and will foster a culture of kindness, respect and belonging.

14. Religion and Belief

- Teaching in RSHE will be sensitive to the religious backgrounds of pupils and will comply with the Equality Act 2010, which recognises religion and belief as protected characteristics. All schools may teach about faith perspectives on relationships and related issues.
- Schools with a religious character may choose to teach their distinctive faith perspective, while ensuring pupils also receive the statutory curriculum in full. When content reflects particular

religious beliefs, this will be made clear, and pupils will be encouraged to engage respectfully with differing views.

15. Pupils who face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing

- The school is committed to ensuring that relationships and health education is accessible to all pupils and supports preparation for adult life. Teaching will be adapted appropriately to meet individual needs and to ensure that all pupils can access, understand and benefit from the curriculum.
- The school recognises that some pupils, particularly those who face barriers to learning and wellbeing, may be more vulnerable to bullying, discrimination, harmful sexual behaviour, abuse, exploitation, coercion and violence. This may include pupils with SEND, social, emotional and mental health needs, learning difficulties, experiences of trauma, caring responsibilities, disadvantage or other vulnerabilities.
- Through the curriculum, pupils will develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to build healthy relationships, keep themselves safe, understand their rights and responsibilities, recognise risk and know how and when to seek help.
- Teaching approaches, resources and support will be adapted, where appropriate, to ensure that all pupils are able to participate fully and achieve the intended outcomes of the curriculum.
- The school will work to identify and remove barriers to participation and will ensure that all pupils, particularly those who face barriers to learning and wellbeing, are able to access the support, information and guidance they need to thrive and prepare successfully for adulthood.

16. Promoting Respectful Relationships and Preventing Harm

- Relationships education is a key part of the school's approach to safeguarding and preparing pupils to become kind, respectful and responsible members of society.
- Through the curriculum, pupils will develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to build healthy relationships, show kindness and respect towards others, recognise prejudice and challenge unkind or discriminatory behaviour.
- The school will promote a culture of kindness, respect, inclusion and belonging. These values will be reflected consistently through the curriculum, behaviour policy, safeguarding arrangements and wider school life.
- Pupils will learn about personal boundaries, privacy and consent in an age-appropriate manner. They will understand the importance of respecting the rights, feelings and personal space of others.
- The curriculum will help pupils to recognise bullying, discrimination, abuse and harmful behaviour, including online. Pupils will learn how to report concerns, seek help and support others safely. Teaching will make clear that abuse is never the fault of the child.
- Staff will actively challenge prejudice, stereotypes, discriminatory language and bullying, including behaviour related to sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. Staff will model respectful behaviour and relationships.
- Pupils will be encouraged to value difference, engage respectfully with the views of others and develop empathy and understanding of experiences that may differ from their own.
- Teaching will support pupils to understand that healthy friendships and relationships are built on kindness, honesty, trust, care, respect and consideration for others.
- The school will ensure that teaching about safety and risk is age-appropriate, sensitive and responsive to pupils' needs and experiences.

17. Safeguarding

- Relationships and health education is a key part of the school's approach to safeguarding. Through the curriculum, pupils develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to keep themselves safe, recognise risk, build healthy relationships and know how and when to seek help.
- Discussions of sensitive topics may lead to safeguarding concerns or disclosures. All staff involved in the delivery of RSHE must be familiar with the school's safeguarding procedures and their responsibilities under Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).
- Any concerns about a pupil's welfare, wellbeing or safety must be acted upon immediately and reported in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Staff must not promise confidentiality where there is a risk of harm. Pupils will be helped to understand how concerns and disclosures are managed and what support is available to them.
- Pupils will be taught how to recognise abuse, neglect, exploitation, coercion and harmful behaviour, how to report concerns and how to access support both within and beyond school.
- Where external agencies or visitors contribute to the delivery of RSHE, appropriate safeguarding arrangements will be agreed in advance, including clear procedures for managing disclosures and reporting concerns.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will support the planning and delivery of RSHE to ensure that teaching reflects safeguarding priorities, emerging risks and the needs of pupils.

18. Responding to pupils' questions

- Pupils may ask questions that extend beyond the planned curriculum or relate to content from which they have been withdrawn. Staff will respond in a way that supports the pupil while remaining consistent with the aims of the curriculum and the school's safeguarding responsibilities.
- Questions will be addressed in an age-appropriate, factual and sensitive manner. Staff will use their professional judgement to determine whether a question can be answered within the classroom setting or whether additional support, guidance or follow-up is required.
- Where appropriate, pupils may be encouraged to discuss questions further with their parents or carers, another trusted adult, pastoral staff or appropriate support services.
- Staff will seek to ensure that pupils receive accurate information and are supported to access reliable sources of advice and support, recognising that unanswered questions may lead pupils to seek information from inappropriate or unreliable sources, including online.
- Where a question raises a safeguarding concern or indicates that a pupil may be at risk of harm, staff must follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy immediately.
- Staff will receive appropriate guidance and training to support them in responding to sensitive questions and knowing when to seek advice or escalate concerns.

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19. Staff training

- Staff involved in the delivery of RSHE will receive appropriate training and support to ensure that they have the subject knowledge, confidence and skills required to deliver the curriculum effectively and safely.

- Training will be updated in response to changes in statutory guidance, safeguarding requirements, curriculum content and emerging issues affecting pupils.

20. Monitoring and review

- The ATLP Trust Board is responsible for approving and reviewing this policy.
- The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where required by changes in legislation, statutory guidance or local need.
- Any significant changes to the policy will be communicated to staff, parents and carers by the headteacher.

Appendix 1: Content to be covered by the end of primary school.

Relationships education: content to be covered by the end of primary. New content is shown in **bold text**

Families and people who care for me

- That families are important for children growing up **safe and happy**, because they can provide love, security and stability.
- The characteristics of safe and happy family life, such as commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, and the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives.
- That other children's families, either in school or the wider world, may look different from their own, but should be respected, and are also characterised by love and care.
- That stable, caring relationships are at the heart of safe and happy families and are important for children's security as they grow up.
- That marriage **and civil partnerships** represent a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people 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 if needed.

Caring friendships

1. How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.
2. **That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded**. **Pupils should learn skills for developing caring, kind friendships**.
3. **That not every child will have the friends they would like at all times, that most people feel lonely sometimes, and that there is no shame in feeling lonely or talking about it.**
4. The characteristics of friendships **that lead to happiness and security**, including mutual respect, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences, and support with problems and difficulties.
5. That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened.
6. **How to manage conflict and that resorting to violence is never right.**
7. How to recognise when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, and how to get support when needed.

Respectful relationships

1. **How to pay attention to the needs and preferences of others, including in families and friendships.**

2. **That we may need to balance the needs and wishes of different people in relationships, and why this can be complicated.**

3. **The importance of setting and respecting healthy boundaries in relationships with friends, family, peers and adults.**

4. **How to communicate effectively and manage conflict with kindness and respect; how to be assertive and express needs and boundaries; how to manage feelings, including disappointment and frustration.**

5. **Pupils should have opportunities to discuss the difference between being assertive and being controlling, and conversely the difference between being kind to other people and neglecting your own needs**.

6. That they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and the importance of respecting others, including those who are different (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices, or have different preferences or beliefs.

7. Practical steps they can take and skills they can develop in a range of different contexts to improve or support their relationships.

8. The conventions of courtesy and manners.

9. The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. **Pupils should have opportunities to think about how they foster their own self-esteem and build a strong sense of their own identity, including through developing skills and interests.**

10. The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult), and how to get help.
11. What a stereotype is, how stereotypes can be unfair, negative, destructive **or lead to bullying, and how to challenge a stereotype.**

12. **How to seek help when needed, including when they are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.**

Online safety and awareness

1. **That people should be respectful in online interactions**, and that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including where people are anonymous.

2. **The importance of avoiding putting pressure on others to share information and images online, and strategies for resisting peer pressure.**

3. How to critically evaluate their online relationships and sources of information, including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. **For example, that people sometimes behave differently online, including pretending to be someone else, or pretending to be a child, and that this can lead to dangerous situations.**

4. How to recognise harmful content or harmful contact, and how to report this.

5. **That there is a minimum age for joining social media sites (currently 13), which protects children from inappropriate content or unsafe contact with older social media users, who may be strangers, including other children and adults.**

6. **The importance of exercising caution about sharing any information about themselves online, and the importance of privacy and location settings to protect information online.**

7. **That any material shared online might be circulated, and that once a picture or words have been circulated there is no way of deleting it everywhere or controlling where it ends up.**

8. **That the internet contains a lot of content that can be inappropriate and upsetting for children, and where to go for advice and support when they feel worried or concerned about something they have seen or engaged with online.**

Being safe

1. What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including online). **This can include learning about boundaries in play and in negotiations about space, toys, books, resources etc.**

2. The concept of privacy and its implications for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.

3. That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe contact, including physical contact.

4. How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online), **including those they do** and do not know.

5. **How to recognise when a relationship is harmful or dangerous, including skills for recognising who to trust and who not to trust.**

6. How to report abuse, concerns about something seen online or experienced in real life, or feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.

7. How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard.

8. Where to get advice, e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

Health education

General wellbeing

- The benefits of physical activity, time outdoors, **and helping others** for health, wellbeing and happiness. Simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family, as well as hobbies, interests and community participation.

- **The importance of promoting general wellbeing and physical health**.

- The range and scale of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) that they might experience in different situations. **Pupils should understand that worrying and feeling down are normal, affect everyone at different times, and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition.**

- How to recognise feelings and use varied vocabulary to talk about their own and others' feelings.

- How to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate.

- That isolation and loneliness can affect children, and the benefits of seeking support.

- That bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing and how to seek help for themselves or others.

- That change and loss, including bereavement, can provoke a range of feelings, that grief is a natural response to bereavement, and that everyone grieves differently.

- Where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including who in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online).

- That it is common to experience mental health problems and early support can help.

Wellbeing online

1. That for almost everyone, the internet is an integral part of life and has many benefits. Pupils should be **supported to think about positive and negative aspects of the internet.**

2. **Pupils should be supported to discuss how online relationships can complement and support meaningful in-person relationships, but also how they might be in tension, and the reasons why online relationships are unlikely to be a good substitute for high quality in-person relationships, looking at the pros and cons of different ways of using online connection.**

3. The benefits of limiting time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing.

4. The benefits of limiting time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing.

5. How to consider the impact of their online behaviour on others, and how to recognise and display respectful behaviour online.

6. Why social media, some apps, computer games and online gaming, including gambling sites, are age restricted.

7. The risks relating to online gaming, video game monetisation, scams, fraud and other financial harms, and that gaming can become addictive.

8. **How to take a critical approach to what they see and read online and make responsible decisions about which content, including content on social media and apps, is appropriate for them**.

9. That abuse, bullying and harassment can take place online and that this can impact wellbeing. How to seek support from trusted adults.

10. How to understand the information they find online, including from search engines, and know how information is selected and targeted.

11. **That they have rights in relation to sharing personal data, privacy and consent.**

12. Where and how to report concerns and get support with issues online.

Physical health and fitness

1. The characteristics and mental and physical benefits of an active lifestyle.

2. The importance of building regular exercise into daily and weekly routines and how to achieve this, for example by walking or cycling to school, a daily active mile, or other forms of regular, vigorous exercise.

3. The risks associated with an inactive lifestyle, including obesity.

4. How and when to seek support, including which adults to speak to in school if they are worried about their health.

Healthy eating

1. What constitutes a healthy diet, including an understanding of calories and other nutritional content.

2. **Understanding the importance of a healthy relationship with food.**

3. The principles of planning and preparing a range of healthy meals.

4. The characteristics of a poor diet and risks associated with unhealthy eating, including obesity and tooth decay and other behaviours, e.g. The impact of alcohol on diet or health.

Drugs alcohol and tobacco

1. The facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and associated risks, including smoking, alcohol use and drug-taking. **This should include the risks of nicotine addiction, which are also caused by other nicotine products such as nicotine pouches.**

Health protection and prevention

1. How to recognise early signs of physical illness, such as weight loss or unexplained changes to the body.

2. About safe and unsafe exposure to the sun, and how to reduce the risk of sun damage, including skin cancer.

3. The importance of sufficient good-quality sleep for good health, **the amount of sleep recommended for their age, and practical steps for improving sleep, such as not using screens in the bedroom**. The impact of poor sleep on weight, mood and ability to learn.

4. About dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene including brushing teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, cleaning between teeth, and regular check-ups at the dentist.

5. About personal hygiene and germs including bacteria and viruses, how they are spread and treated, and the importance of handwashing.

6. The facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination. **The introduction of topics relating to vaccination and immunisation should be aligned with when vaccinations are offered to pupils.**

Personal safety

1. **About hazards (including fire risks) that may cause harm, injury or risk and ways to reduce risks.**
2. **How to recognise risk and keep safe around roads, railways, including level crossings, and water, including the water safety code.**

Basic first aid

1. How to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services if necessary, **including the importance of reporting incidents rather than filming them.**

2. Concepts of basic first aid, for example dealing with common injuries and ailments, including head injuries.

Developing bodies

1. About growth and other ways the body can change and develop, particularly during adolescence. This topic should include the human lifecycle, and puberty should be discussed as a stage in this process.

2. **The correct names of body parts, including the penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum, nipples. Pupils should understand that all of these parts of the body are private and have skills to understand and express their own boundaries around these body parts.**

3. The facts about the menstrual cycle, including physical and emotional changes, whilst the average age of the onset of menstruation is twelve, periods can start at eight, so covering this topic before girls' periods start will help them understand what to expect and avoid distress.

Appendix 2: Summary of key changes

Section	New / Expanded Content for 2026
Families and people who care for me	- more **proactive, preventative approach**; moving beyond compliance with EA 2010 to emphasise **why safe, loving, and stable families matter for children's happiness and security.** - actively promoting respect for diverse family structures and encouraging empathy, understanding, and **positive relationship habits**. Emphasis on **commitment, care and spending time together as protective factors** -inclusion of **civil partnerships** as well as marriage - strengthened wording on equipping pupils to recognise and seek help for unhealthy or unsafe situations.
Caring friendships	Discrete sections on friendships and relationships – previously one section. Moving from knowing about to knowing how; beyond respect to teaching children **skills for developing caring, kind friendships**. - **Loneliness**: not every child will have the friends they want all the time; most people feel lonely sometimes; no shame in talking about it.
Respectful, kind relationships	- **Paying attention to needs/preferences of others while balancing needs/wishes in relationships.** – **Importance of healthy boundaries**. – Importance of **good communication to positive relationships; managing feelings**. - Differences between being **assertive vs controlling**, and being **kind vs neglecting own needs**. - **Conventions of courtesy and manners. Opportunities to foster self-esteem and build identity** through skills/interests. - Expanded stereotypes content: stereotypes can **lead to bullying** and how to **challenge** them. - **Seeking help when concerned about violence, harm, or unsure who to trust**.
Online safety and awareness	**Shift in emphasis from knowing about to knowing how: respectful online interactions** including when anonymous. - Avoiding **pressuring others to share info/images**; resisting peer pressure and **evaluating their online relationships.** - Risks: **pretending to be someone else or a child**. - **Minimum social media age (13)** and why. - Importance of **privacy/location settings**. – **strengthened wording** about lack of control once something is shared online. - Support if upset by **inappropriate/upsetting content** online.
Being safe	- Expanded content reflecting shift from a factual, legalistic focus on serious harms to **developmentally appropriate, preventative curriculum** centred on **boundaries, privacy, trust, and safety;** teaching pupils the everyday skills and language to understand ownership of their own bodies, set and respect boundaries, and recognise unsafe situations. Examples for boundaries in **play, space, toys, resources**. - Recognising **harmful/dangerous**

Section	New / Expanded Content for 2026
	relationships and **who to trust/not trust; embedding safety, trust, and consent skills as part of daily life.**
Wellbeing **(New section on general wellbeing)**	**Broader focus from 'mental wellbeing' to holistic view that integrates physical health, emotional wellbeing, and social connectedness.** **Emphasis on preventative habits that support belonging and flourishing, such as physical activity, time outdoors, helping others, rest, hobbies, and community participation.** **New content on bereavement and grief** **Common low moods reframed as normal rather than pathological** **Streamlines language while retaining core skills for recognising and managing emotions, seeking help, and supporting others.**
Wellbeing online	**Shift in emphasis from narrow focus on *internet safety* towards a broader view of *online wellbeing;* from protective to proactive, supporting pupils to use the internet in ways that promote wellbeing as well as safety.** **Stronger focus on the quality of online relationships, balance between online and in-person connections** **Risks of online activity beyond social interactions** **New elements on gambling, gaming monetisation, scams, fraud, financial harms, and gaming addiction.** **Emphasis on healthy, balanced digital lives and value of in-person relationships, managing screen time, and making responsible choices online** **Critical evaluation of online content, alongside rights to privacy and consent.**
Healthy eating	**New emphasis on teaching healthy relationship with food**
Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping	**Vaping added to this section** **Risks of nicotine addiction caused by nicotine products such as pouches.**
Health protection and prevention	**Emphasis on protecting good health as well as avoiding poor health** **Additional content on sleep includes recommendations for age and minimising screen use in bedroom**

Section	New / Expanded Content for 2026
	Emphasis on aligning teaching on vaccination and immunisation with when vaccinations are offered to pupils.
Personal safety	**New section on personal safety – recognising and reducing risks associated with fire, water, road and rail including water safety code.**
Basic first aid	**Emphasis on reporting not filming incidents**
Developing bodies	**More comprehensive understanding of physical development across the human lifecycle; shift from delivering information to building knowledge, language, and self-protective skills that support confidence and body awareness.** **Explicit teaching of correct anatomical terms for private body parts, linked to personal boundaries and privacy skills.** **Menstrual education is expanded to include a wider age range and a preventative approach, ensuring pupils are prepared before menstruation begins to reduce distress.**