Pathway Trust

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Physical Health and Mental Well-being Policy

Policy effective from	1 September 2026
Policy owner	Director of Inclusion
Policy applies to	Berrow Church Primary School Burnham-on-Sea Infant School Castle Batch Primary School Charfield Primary School Cherry Garden Primary School Downend School East Huntspill Primary School Lyde Green Primary School Mangotsfield School Marlwood School Pawlett Primary School Priory Community School Severn Beach Primary School St Andrew's Church Junior School St Anne's Church Primary School The Castle School The King Alfred School Tortworth Primary School West Huntspill Primary School Worle Community School Pathway Partnership Teams
Policy changes since last version	New policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The trust believes that to prepare for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life, children and young people need to have the knowledge, skills and self-confidence to make informed and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health, and relationships. Relationships Education (at Primary phase) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE, at secondary phase) is about giving children and young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. Health education is giving pupils information to make well-informed, positive choices about their own health and wellbeing. The trust recognises that physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked, and it is important that pupils understand that good physical health contributes to good mental health and vice versa. It is important the student can recognise when things are not right in their own health or the health of others, and can seek support when needed.

1.2 The trust has a responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure the best for all pupils at its schools irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, maternity, religion, or sexual orientation. Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education will be sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils and may need to adapt and change over time to reflect the needs of the particular cohort. The trust may also take positive actions, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular character disadvantages affecting one group because of a protected characteristic.

1.3 The trust is aware of the need to be mindful of, and respectful to a wide variety of faith and cultural beliefs across its schools and will make every attempt to be appropriately sensitive. Equally, it is essential that children and young people still have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy, and understand their rights as individuals. The trust believes that its pupils deserve the right to honest, clear, and impartial scientific and factual information to help better form their own beliefs and values, free from bias, judgement, or subjective personal beliefs of those who teach them.

1.4 The trust will ensure pupils understand the importance of equality and respect and that they learn about all protected characteristics, including sexual orientation and gender reassignment, by the end of their secondary education. The teaching of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender content will be sensitive and age appropriate, and will be fully integrated into programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a standalone unit or lesson. The trust is mindful that beyond the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment there is significant debate, and will be careful not to endorse any particular view or teach it as fact. However, the trust will ensure pupils are taught to recognise that all those with a protected characteristic should be treated with dignity and respect.

1.5 Our trust-wide approach to RSE has been developed following consultations led by each school with parents, pupils and staff. This ensures that our RSE Policy reflects the needs of all pupils across the trust's schools.

1.6 The policy will be reviewed annually, and parents will be consulted in advance about significant changes.

2. Aims and objectives

2.1 Through the delivery of high quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate relationships education, RSE and health education, the trust aims to help prepare pupils for the onset of puberty, give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene, create a positive culture in relation to sexuality and relationships and to ensure pupils know how and when to ask for help and where to access support. By the end of their education the trust hopes pupils will have developed resilience and feelings of self-respect, confidence, and empathy in preparation for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

2.2 Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education are intended to help pupils to:

- Build healthy, respectful relationships focusing on family and friends.
- Understand how to be healthy and be aware of potential risk areas (such as drugs and alcohol).
- Learn about intimate relationships and sex.
- Learn about mental wellbeing.
- Develop key personal attributes, such as kindness, integrity, generosity, and honesty.

3. Definition of Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

3.1 Relationships education at primary phase is about teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults and who can support them. It includes how to take turns, how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect, the importance of honesty and truthfulness, permission seeking and giving, and the concept of personal privacy, establishing personal space and boundaries. Relationships education doesn't involve explaining the detail of different forms of sexual activity, but can cover sensitive topics such as sexual violence in order to keep children safe.

3.2 RSE at secondary phase is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral, and emotional development. It is about teaching sex, sexuality and sexual health in a way that gives pupils the confidence to make sound decisions when facing risks and other challenges. It includes teaching about friendship, the importance of caring, stable, and mutually supportive relationships with another person, and how to control and understand feelings that come with being in a relationship.

3.3 RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It teaches children and young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others, to build self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity so that they can develop safe, fulfilling, and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

3.4 RSE will outline that there are different types of committed, stable relationships, the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships, the

importance of marriage as a relationship choice and why it must be freely entered into, how relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for raising children, as well as highlighting the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, characteristics of successful parenting and how to judge when relationships have become unsafe as well as how to seek help or advice and report concerns about others.

4. Roles and responsibilities

All members of the trust community are expected to follow this policy. Roles, responsibilities, and expectations of each section of the trust and school community are set out in detail below.

4.1 Board of Trustees

Trustees will monitor and evaluate the impact of the policy by reviewing pupils' progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes. They will hold the Chief Executive and Headteachers to account for the implementation of the policy.

4.2 The Chief Executive

The Chief Executive will ensure that Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education is taught consistently across the schools within the trust and will report back to the Board of Trustees on educational outcomes. They will ensure that school leaders receive regular professional development training in how to deliver Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education.

4.3 Headteacher

Each Headteacher, with support from their senior leadership team, will ensure that staff are supported and up to date with policy changes. They will ensure that Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education are well led, effectively managed and well planned across various subjects (to avoid unnecessary duplication of topics) and that the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation. The Headteacher will ensure that teaching is age-appropriate, delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND, and that the subjects are resourced, staffed, and timetabled appropriately. They will ensure that teaching delivered by any external organisation is age-appropriate and accessible for pupils and will liaise with parents about any concerns or opinions regarding Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education provision and will manage parental requests for withdrawal of pupils from non-statutory, non-science components of Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education .

4.4 Staff

Teachers of Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education will ensure that they are up to date with school policy and curriculum requirements regarding sex education and will attend and engage in professional development training. Teachers will encourage pupils to communicate concerns regarding their social, personal, and emotional development in confidence, listen to their needs, and support them seriously. If a pupil comes to a member of staff with an issue that the member of staff

feels they are not able to deal with alone, they will take this concern to their line manager.

4.5 **Parents**

The trust hopes to build a positive and supporting relationship with parents through mutual understanding, cooperation, and trust. Parents are expected to share the responsibility of sex education and support their children's personal, social, and emotional development. The trust hopes parents will create an open home environment where pupils can engage, discuss, and continue to learn about matters that have been raised through school. Parents are also encouraged to seek additional support in this from the academy their child attends where they feel it is needed.

4.6 **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to take Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education seriously. Pupils are expected to listen, be considerate of other pupils' feelings and beliefs, comply with class-set confidentiality rules and support one another with issues that arise during class. Pupils who fail to follow these standards of behaviour will be dealt with under the behaviour policy.

5. Delivery of Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education

5.1 Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education will be delivered in a non-judgmental, factual way allowing scope for children and young people to ask questions in a safe environment. Teachers will tailor the delivery of relationships education, RSE and health education to meet the specific needs of the pupils in that class, and to be responsive to their behaviour and development. Classes will explore different attitudes, values, and social labels, and develop skills that will enable our pupils to make informed decisions regarding sex and relationships as well as being able to differentiate between fact, opinion and belief and an understanding of the law on various topics. Pupils will be taught the anatomically correct names for body parts, but slang or everyday terms used in certain social circles will be discussed; this will surround discussion about what is and is not acceptable language to use.

5.2 Staff will ensure that all resources used in the delivery of Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education are appropriate for the age and needs of their pupils. Examples of these resources can be found on each school's website.

5.3 **Primary schools**:

Details of the Relationships Education programme for our primary schools are published on each school's website. Children of the same age may be developmentally at different stages, leading to differing types of questions or behaviours. Staff will use teaching methods that take account of these differences and the potential for discussion on a one-to-one basis or in small groups.

5.4 **Secondary schools:**

Details of the RSE programme for our secondary schools are published on each school's website. In our secondary schools, RSE will be delivered through a range of

subjects and will build on the foundation of Relationships Education delivered in primary school.

6. Relationships education and RSE: Curriculum and outcomes

6.1 The Relationships Education curriculum and learning outcomes that pupils are expected to achieve by the end of their primary education are set out on each school's website. The trust recognises that primary-age pupils may ask their teachers or other adults questions pertaining to sex or sexuality which go beyond the designed curriculum for Relationships Education. Teaching methods will take account of the potential different types of questions and behaviours likely to arise and staff will assess which types of teaching methods would be most appropriate (for example, a full class setting, one-to-one discussions or in small groups).

6.2 The RSE curriculum and learning outcomes that pupils are expected to achieve by the end of their secondary education are set out on each school's website.

7. Health education: Physical health and mental well-being

7.1 The trust wishes to promote pupils' health and well-being by encouraging self-control, their ability to self-regulate and strategies for doing so. This will enable pupils to become confident in their ability to achieve well and persevere even when they encounter setbacks or when their goals are distant, and to respond calmly and rationally to setbacks and challenges. The trust believes that an integrated, whole-school approach to the teaching and promotion of health and wellbeing will have a positive impact on behaviour and attainment. Health Education will be delivered through a range of subjects.

7.2 The Health Education curriculum and learning outcomes that pupils are expected to achieve by the end of their primary education are set out on each school's website.

7.3 The Health Education curriculum and learning outcomes that pupils are expected to achieve by the end of their secondary education are set out on each school's website.

8. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities

8.1 The trust will endeavour to ensure that relationships education, RSE, and health education is accessible for all pupils. We are aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships education, RSE and health education may be particularly important for such pupils, for example those with social, emotional and mental health needs or learning disabilities. Teaching will be sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, differentiated and personalised to meet the specific needs of pupils at different developmental stages.

8.2 Staff will make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages faced by pupils with disabilities and will be mindful of the SEND code of practice and the trust's SEND policy when planning for these subjects. Staff will use a variety of different strategies to ensure that all pupils have access to the same information.

9. Right to request withdrawal from sex education

9.1 The trust hopes that parents will feel comfortable with, and understand the importance of, the education provided to their children as described in this policy.

9.2 Parents of children in primary schools have the right to withdraw their child from sex education and should state this in writing and send it to the Headteacher.

9.3 Parents of children in secondary schools have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education aspects of RSE. Any parent wishing to withdraw their child from sex education in a secondary school should put their request in writing and send it to the Headteacher who will arrange a meeting to discuss their concerns. Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

9.4 Before withdrawing or making a request, the trust strongly urges parents to carefully consider their decision as sex education is a vital part of the school curriculum and supports child development. Parents cannot withdraw their child from Relationships or Health Education or the elements on human growth and reproduction which fall under the science curriculum.

9.5 If a pupil is excused from sex education the school will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

10. Confidentiality and Child Protection

10.1 The trust hopes to provide a safe and supportive school community where pupils feel comfortable seeking help and guidance on anything that may be concerning them about life either at school or at home. All teachers will receive training around confidentiality and should ensure that pupils understand that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. If a child protection issue is disclosed to a member of staff, that member of staff should follow the trust's child protection and safeguarding procedures.

10.2 If a staff member is approached by a pupil under 16 who is having, or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, the teacher should:

- Ensure that the pupil is accessing all the contraceptive and sexual health advice available and understands the risks of being sexually active.
- Encourage the pupil to talk to their parent or carer. Pupils may feel that they are more comfortable bringing these issues to a teacher they trust, but it is important that children and their parents have open and trusting relationships when it comes to sexual health and the school will encourage this as much as possible.
- Decide whether there is a child protection issue. This may be the case if the teacher is concerned that there is coercion or abuse involved. If a member of staff is informed that a pupil under 13 is having, or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, this will be dealt with under child protection procedures.

10.3 Pupils with special educational needs may be more vulnerable to exploitation and less able to protect themselves from harmful influences. If staff are concerned that this is the case, they should seek support from the Designated Safeguarding Lead to decide what is in the best interest of the child.

11. Equal opportunities

11.1 Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education will be delivered equally to both genders, normally in mixed classes. There are, however, certain topics that may be delivered in single sex groupings, e.g. menstruation and personal hygiene.

11.2 The trust has a commitment to ensure that Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education is relevant to all pupils and is taught in a way that is age and stage appropriate. Pupils are encouraged to openly and freely discuss diversity of personal, social and sexual preferences. Prejudiced views will be challenged, and equality promoted. Any bullying that relates to sexual behaviour or perceived sexual orientation will be dealt with swiftly and seriously in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

12. Complaints

If parents have any concerns or complaints over the application or implementation of this policy, they should raise their concerns with a staff member or the Headteacher in accordance with the trust's Complaints Procedure.