

THE ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL

Academy Trust - Special School

Mountdale Gardens, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 4AW

Headteacher: Mr D Woodman

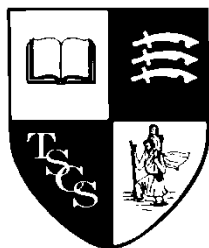
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SEN Trust Southend



Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

In accordance with DfE Statutory Guidance 2025 | Effective September 2026

First written	June 2011
Last revised	May 2021
This revision	May 2026 — updated to reflect DfE Statutory Guidance 2025
Next review	July 2028
Policy owner	PSHCE Coordinators
Approved by	Headteacher and Full Governing Body
Staff responsible	Jamie Mander (Secondary) and Paul Shuttleworth (Primary) PSHCE Coordinators

1. Statutory context and definitions

The St. Christopher School Academy Trust is a special school serving pupils aged 4–19 with severe learning difficulties (SLD) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This policy sets out our approach to Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education (collectively referred to as RSHE throughout this document).

RSHE is a statutory entitlement for all pupils. The following legislation and guidance underpin this policy:

- Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 — making Relationships Education and Health Education compulsory in all schools from September 2020
- DfE Statutory Guidance: Relationships, Sex and Health Education (2025) — which this policy reflects and which takes full statutory effect from September 2026
- Education Act 2002 / Academies Act 2010 — duty to provide a balanced and broadly-based curriculum that promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development and prepares them for adult life
- SEND Code of Practice 2015 — which requires that RSHE is made accessible and appropriately adapted for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities
- Equality Act 2010 — including the Public Sector Equality Duty; our RSHE provision is inclusive of all protected characteristics
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current) — RSHE is an integral part of our safeguarding approach



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Definitions

Relationships Education covers the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, healthy relationships, personal safety, and the changes that happen during puberty. It does not involve explicit teaching about sexual activity.

Sex Education covers human reproduction, contraception, sexually transmitted infections and related topics. At our school, sex education is taught to pupils in Key Stage 3 and above, where it is developmentally appropriate, in addition to the biological content covered through the science curriculum.

Health Education covers physical and mental health and wellbeing, including puberty, healthy lifestyles, emotional wellbeing, first aid, and internet safety.

2. Vision, aims and intended outcomes

The St. Christopher School is committed to developing a positive learning community where every pupil feels safe, valued and respected. RSHE is not a standalone subject — it is fundamental to the social, emotional, mental health and physical development of each learner in our care.

Our RSHE curriculum aims to ensure that all pupils:

- develop the knowledge, skills, language and confidence to build healthy, safe and positive relationships
- understand their own personal, emotional and physical development at a level appropriate to their individual stage
- are equipped with the knowledge and skills to recognise and respond to risk, including online risks, and to keep themselves safe
- develop a positive self-image, self-worth and emotional resilience
- are prepared, as far as possible, for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life
- understand and respect difference and diversity in all its forms

For our pupils, RSHE has an additional and critical safeguarding function. Research consistently indicates that young people with SLD and ASD face a heightened risk of abuse and exploitation. Our RSHE curriculum is designed to reduce that risk by building pupils' knowledge of safe and unsafe situations, their right to safety, and who they can tell.

3. Curriculum design and content

Age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate delivery

All pupils at The St. Christopher School are entitled to age-appropriate RSHE content, in line with statutory requirements. However, for pupils with SLD and ASD, the way content is delivered must reflect each pupil's developmental stage, communication needs and individual learning profile. These two considerations — age-appropriate content and developmentally appropriate delivery — are distinct, and our school navigates this distinction deliberately and carefully.

This means we do not disapply RSHE for any pupil, nor do we water down its content. Instead, we adapt delivery through the use of visual supports, Makaton, AAC systems, social stories, concrete and tactile resources, and individualised plans. The correct anatomical names for all body parts, including genitalia, are used consistently across RSHE provision to support safeguarding. Where symbols are used to support communication, these are consistent across the school and staff model the correct anatomical vocabulary.

Three-strand delivery model

RSHE at The St. Christopher School is delivered through three interconnected strands:

- **Strand 1:** Discrete timetabled RSHE lessons

All pupils from Early Years to Post-16 access RSHE lessons as part of the PSHE curriculum under the 'Changing and Growing' theme .

These lessons are planned and sequenced to ensure coverage of statutory content across all key stages, and are taught by class teachers or the PSHCE Coordinators. In the primary phase, the class teacher leads delivery, drawing on support from the PSHCE Coordinators as needed. In the secondary phase, lessons are led by the class tutor. RSE is taught for at least a half term in the secondary phase under the Changing and Growing theme. Delivery is differentiated across the school's three curriculum routes (Pathway, Blended and Subject Core) as set out in the PSHCE Policy, ensuring RSHE is accessible and appropriately ambitious for every learner.

- **Strand 2:** Embedded across the curriculum

RSHE themes are reinforced and extended across the wider curriculum. Examples include: body awareness and personal space in PE; online safety in ICT; emotional literacy through communication and language activities; personal hygiene in life skills; and respect and diversity across all subjects. Class teachers are aware of RSHE objectives and actively reinforce them in relevant curriculum contexts.

- **Strand 3:** Bespoke individual and family support

For pupils where individual learning profiles require a more personalised approach, bespoke RSHE support is provided. This may involve 1:1 delivery, targeted use of resources adapted to a specific communication system, or work that directly aligns with targets in the pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). For relevant pupils, RSHE outcomes are referenced within EHCP targets, ensuring that RSHE is part of each individual's curriculum offer.

Key stage content overview

The following provides a summary of RSHE content covered at each key stage. Schemes of work and curriculum maps are held by the PSHCE Coordinators and are available to parents on request.

Key Stage	Content focus
Early Years / KS1	Positive self-image and self-worth; developing friendships; families and people who care for me; personal space and safe/unsafe touch; body parts including correct anatomical names; basic personal safety; emotional literacy.
KS2	Body changes and puberty (physical and emotional); menstrual health and hygiene; healthy and unhealthy relationships; different types of families; online safety including sharing images; personal safety including NSPCC PANTS; mental health and emotional wellbeing.
KS3	Puberty continued (wet dreams, erections, menstruation, masturbation, positive body image); public and private behaviour; types of relationships; consent; sexual exploitation, grooming and online safety; gender identity and sexual orientation; responsible decision-making including alcohol and drug awareness; personal safety.
KS4 / Post-16	Sexual relationships including STIs and contraception; abortion and parenting; sexual ethics and consent; challenging misogyny and gender stereotyping; financial exploitation and knife crime awareness; domestic abuse; emotional health and bereavement; independent living skills; preparation for adulthood. KS4 pupils may also access ASDAN or AQA Unit Award qualifications in relevant RSHE topics.

4. Assessment and progression

RSHE at The St. Christopher School is assessed using a bespoke assessment framework built within Evidence for Learning (EfL), developed in alignment with the PSHE Association's guidance for pupils with SEND. The framework is organised around the six PSHE Association curriculum strands, each with progressive assessment criteria from Branch 1 through to Branch 8, reflecting the full range of learners across our three curriculum routes. Assessments are completed termly and cover the two thematic areas addressed during that term. This framework reflects the developmental nature of our pupils' progress and recognises that learning in RSHE may not follow a linear trajectory.

Assessment is conducted through:

- Teacher observation and professional judgement
- Pupil voice, gathered through adapted methods including Talking Mats, photo-choice activities, PECS-based responses, and key worker conversations
- Evidence portfolios including annotated pupil work and adapted resources
- Staff-peer assessment and cross-moderation

In Key Stage 4, pupils may also work towards ASDAN Awards and AQA Unit Awards in relevant RSHE topic areas, providing nationally recognised accreditation where appropriate.

Where RSHE outcomes are referenced within a pupil's EHCP, progress is reported to parents and the local authority through the Annual Review process.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body holds ultimate responsibility for this policy and for ensuring the school meets its statutory RSHE duties. At least one governor representative will be involved in the review and approval of this policy. Governors are updated on RSHE provision through regular school monitoring visits.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented, that all staff have the knowledge and support needed to deliver RSHE effectively, and that RSHE is appropriately resourced.

PSHE / RSHE Lead

RSHE is led jointly by the two PSHCE Coordinators: Jamie Mander (Secondary) and Paul Shuttleworth (Primary), with Jamie Mander maintaining links to post-16 provision. Together they are responsible for: developing and maintaining the RSHE curriculum and schemes of work; supporting and monitoring staff delivery; maintaining the curriculum evidence file; liaising with parents and external agencies; and leading the annual curriculum review. The PSHCE Coordinators report to the Headteacher on RSHE provision and meet regularly with the curriculum governor to discuss provision and development priorities.

Class Teachers

All class teachers are responsible for delivering RSHE in line with this policy and the associated schemes of work. Teachers are supported by the PSHCE Coordinators and have access to PSHE Association quality-assured resources. Class teachers in the primary phase lead RSHE delivery with support from the primary PSHCE Coordinator. Any teacher who has concerns about delivering RSHE content should raise these with the relevant PSHCE Coordinator.

Staff training

All staff delivering RSHE receive appropriate continuing professional development. This includes: induction for new staff; training on adapted delivery methods for pupils with SLD and ASD; safeguarding awareness in the context of RSHE; and updates when statutory guidance changes.

6. Safe and effective practice

RSHE lessons at The St. Christopher School are delivered within a safe, structured and supportive environment. The following principles underpin all RSHE delivery:

- Ground rules are established with pupils at the start of each unit, adapted to the communication and understanding levels of the group
- Distancing techniques are used where appropriate, for example through the use of stories, scenarios and characters rather than personal disclosure
- The correct anatomical names for body parts, including genitalia, are used consistently to support safeguarding
- Staff are sensitive to pupils' individual backgrounds, experiences and current circumstances

- No outside agencies are used to deliver RSHE. This reflects parents' and carers' strong preference, as evidenced through consultation, that RSHE is delivered by people who know their child well. External agencies may be used for consultation and resource development
- Questions from pupils are treated with respect and responded to appropriately. If a question raises safeguarding concerns or goes beyond the planned content, the response is delayed (but not dismissed) and referred to the PSHCE Coordinators or Designated Safeguarding Lead

7. Safeguarding

This policy operates within the school's broader safeguarding framework and should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (current), and related policies including Safe Touch, Behaviour and Anti-Bullying, E-Safety, and Equality and Diversity.

RSHE is one of the school's most important safeguarding tools. Young people with SLD and ASD are statistically at higher risk of abuse and exploitation. Our curriculum explicitly teaches pupils about safe and unsafe touch, consent, online safety, recognising risky situations, and who to tell if something worries them.

Any disclosure made during an RSHE lesson must be managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy. Staff will not promise confidentiality, will listen carefully, and will refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay. If a pupil appears to be experiencing difficulties related to sensitive RSHE content, staff will liaise sensitively with parents/carers and the PSHCE Coordinators about the most appropriate way to support that pupil.

Staff are also reminded that RSHE lessons can, on occasion, surface disclosures or distress from adult staff members. Any such concerns should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the school's Senior Mental Health Lead.

8. Engagement with parents, carers and the wider community

The St. Christopher School is committed to meaningful partnership with parents and carers in relation to RSHE. We recognise that for many of our pupils, particularly in relation to sensitive topics such as puberty, relationships and personal safety, family involvement is essential to reinforce learning at home.

Our approach to parent engagement includes:

- Parents and carers are notified in advance when RSHE units are due to begin, particularly for sensitive topics
- Resources and simplified guides are shared with families so that learning can be supported and reinforced at home
- Individual consultations are offered where families have specific concerns about content or their child's individual needs
- The RSHE policy is published on the school website and is available to all parents and carers on request
- At the start of each half term, timetables and topic maps are shared with families through ClassDojo, ensuring parents and carers are informed about upcoming content and supported to continue conversations at home.
- All curriculum materials used to teach RSHE are available for parents to view on request by contacting the school office for the attention of the PSHCE Coordinators.

Consulting parents in policy review

This policy has been developed in consultation with parents, carers, pupils, staff and governors. Consultation is not negotiation — the Governing Body retains responsibility for the final policy — but the views of the whole school community are valued and reflected where possible. Parents are not able to veto curriculum content.

9. Right to withdraw from Sex Education

Parents and carers have the legal right to withdraw their child from some or all sex education, except for biological content covered within the national science curriculum. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

If a parent or carer wishes to withdraw their child from sex education, they should contact the PSHCE Coordinators in writing via the school office to discuss this. The school will:

- Discuss the request with the parent or carer and explore any concerns
- Ensure the pupil receives purposeful and appropriate education during any withdrawal period
- Revisit the request at regular intervals and, where a pupil is approaching three terms before their 16th birthday, give the pupil the opportunity to express their own view on whether they wish to receive sex education

We encourage open dialogue before any decision to withdraw, and our experience is that when parents understand the content and the adapted delivery approaches used for our pupils, withdrawals are rare.

10. Monitoring and evaluation

The delivery and quality of RSHE provision is monitored and evaluated by the PSHCE Coordinators on an ongoing basis. The monitoring cycle includes:

- Termly review of curriculum planning — checking coverage against statutory content requirements
- Lesson observations and learning walks with specific RSHE focus
- Staff self-assessment and peer review
- Annual curriculum audit — a full coverage check against statutory content, identifying any gaps
- Maintenance of an RSHE evidence file, containing: planning documents, adapted resources, monitoring records and CPD records.
- CPD records — ensuring all staff delivering RSHE have received appropriate and up-to-date training

Findings from monitoring are reported to the Headteacher and, through the Governing Body's curriculum committee, to governors. The PSHCE Coordinators use monitoring findings to inform curriculum development and staff development priorities.

11. Links to other policies

This policy should be read alongside the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- PSHE Education
- Science Curriculum
- Equality and Diversity
- Safe Touch
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying
- E-Safety and Online Safety
- Drug and Alcohol Education
- SEND Policy and Information Report
- Curriculum Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Communication Policy

12. Policy review

In line with PSHE Association guidance, this policy will be reviewed every 18–24 months to ensure it remains current, reflects any changes to statutory guidance, and continues to meet the needs of pupils, staff, parents and the wider school community.

This policy approved by	Headteacher and Full Governing Body
Date of approval	[INSERT DATE]
Next review date	[INSERT DATE]
Review to be led by	PSHCE Coordinators

This policy reflects the DfE Statutory Guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education (2025), the PSHE Association's guidance for writing and updating RSE policies (2025), and the PSHE Association's SEN guidance. It has been developed using the PSHE Association's policy framework.