Model PSHE and RSHE policy for use by East Sussex schools

The Oak Tree Federation

Adapted and edited by the Oak Tree Federation- July 2026

Personal, Social, Health & Economic (PSHE) education policy – including relationships education, sex education (RSE) and health education

Policy date and review

This policy was approved on **3.6.26** and will be reviewed every 2 years or sooner if the PSHE curriculum is amended, for example in response to emerging themes, changing pupil needs or introduction of new legislation and guidance. The next review date of this policy is currently set for **September 2028.**

The Oak Tree Federation Governing Body monitors the impact of PSHE on an annual basis. The governors give serious consideration to any comments, consultation and evidence of impact.

Consultation with pupils will be conducted on a regular basis to support with reviewing the curriculum to ensure it remains responsive to emerging needs and the policy updated accordingly.

Policy context and rationale

This policy covers the **Oak Tree Federation** approach to teaching Personal, Social, Health & Economic (PSHE) education which includes relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). This policy has been updated to reflect the new RSHE Guidance released in July 2025 (for implementation by September 2026). This policy has been subject to thorough consultation with the whole-school community including pupils, parents/carers, staff, school governors and where relevant appropriate members of the wider community such as medical professionals and faith leaders. Pupil consultation has ensured that the needs of all pupils can be met through the delivery of an age and stage appropriate curriculum that addresses relevant issues, informed by analysis of public health data and pupil priorities.

Policy availability

Stakeholders can be informed about the policy through consultation events or by accessing a copy from the school website. Should a hard-copy of the document be required, the school will be happy to provide this upon request and will also work with any stakeholders that require the policy in an alternative format to meet their individual needs, ensuring equitable accessibility for all. The policy can be obtained in an alternative format by contacting **the school office.**

Policy values, aims and objectives

Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.

Our school's overarching aims and objectives for pupils are to inspire learning for life and this is underpinned at Firle CEP through John 10:10 'I come that they may have life and have it in abundance. 'PSHE at our school is underpinned by a clear set of embedded values and principles that complement the school ethos and permeate through the teaching practice, resources and classroom management of delivery.

Our values at Laughton CP our Collaboration, Resilience, Curiosity, Imagination and Discipline. At Firle CEP they are Aspiration, Respect, Kindness, Perseverance, Working with Others and Forgiveness.

RSHE is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health in an age and stage appropriate manner. RSHE equips children and young people with accurate information, positive values and the skills to enjoy healthy, safe and positive relationships, to celebrate their sexuality and to take responsibility for their health and wellbeing both now and in the future. We recognise the importance of PSHE in preparing children and young people to live safe, fulfilled and healthy lives. The overarching objective of PSHE is to support children and young people through a journey of physical, emotional and moral development via the teaching of essential knowledge, skills and values within the framework of the law and relevant acts and guidance.

Effective RSHE can make a significant contribution to the development of personal skills needed by pupils to establish and maintain relationships. RSHE will ensure children and young people are encouraged to understand the importance of stable, loving relationships, respect, love, and care. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

PSHE will be approached through evidence-based, best practice principles to ensure the highest impact on improving pupil health, wellbeing, safeguarding and lifelong outcomes. The following principles are based on research evidence, supported by a wide range of leading organisations.

Principles of effective PSHE

Our PSHE programme:

- Is an identifiable part of our school curriculum, which has planned, timetabled lessons across all the Key Stages.
- Is taught by staff regularly trained in PSHE

- Uses carefully selected expert visitors invited in to enhance and supplement the programme, where appropriate.
- Works in partnership with parents and carers, informing them about what their children will be learning and how they can contribute at home.
- Delivers lessons where pupils feel safe and encourages participation by using a variety of teaching approaches with opportunities to develop critical thinking and relationship skills.
- Is based on reliable sources of information, including about the law and legal rights, and distinguishes between fact and opinion.
- Promotes safe, equal, caring and enjoyable relationships and discusses real-life issues appropriate to the age and stage of pupils, including friendships, families, consent, relationship abuse, sexual exploitation and safe relationships online.
- Gives medically accurate information so that pupils can learn about their bodies and sexual and reproductive health in ways that are appropriate to their age and maturity.
- Gives pupils opportunities to reflect on their values and influences (such as from peers, media, faith and culture) that may shape their attitudes to relationships and nurture respect for different views.
- Includes learning about how to get help and treatment from safe sources such as health and advice services including reliable information online.
- Fosters gender equality and LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans) equality and challenges all forms of discrimination in everyday school life.
- Meets the needs of all pupils with their diverse experiences including those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Seeks pupils' views so that teaching can be made relevant to their real lives and assessed and adapted as their needs change.

Entitlement and equality of opportunity

All children are entitled to access a broad and balanced curriculum delivered in an age and stage appropriate manner. Teachers will include a range of teaching styles and groupings to allow all children to make progress. Every child will be given opportunity to develop their skills independently and in groups, enhancing their own confidence and self–esteem.

We actively celebrate the diversity of our pupils, their families and the wider whole-school community. PSHE will always be taught in a non-judgemental, non-biased and fully inclusive manner through clear, impartial, scientific information as well as covering the law to ensure all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. We do not use RSHE as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation over another.

Thorough consultation, continual assessment and regular reviews of the curriculum we ensure that we continually recognise and respect pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity, personal circumstances (including faith or culture and that of their family, friends and the wider whole-school community) in accordance with the school's inclusion policy.

Teaching and learning

The PSHE programme will be led by **Mrs Dyer**, and taught by **class teachers and supported by TAs, visitors and outside agencies**. All staff involved in the delivery of PSHE have received specialist training to ensure that pupils receive clear and consistent approaches throughout their time at **The Oak Tree Federation** . Whole staff and individual training needs will be identified through the school's self-evaluation process and staff appraisal.

On occasion external visitors, experts and agencies may be invited to contribute to the delivery of PSHE to enhance delivery of these subjects, bringing in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging with children and young people. When this happens, our school will follow our External Visitor Policy which includes:

- Check the visitor or visiting organisation's credentials.
- Ensure the teaching delivered by the visitor fits with our planned programme and our published policy.
- Discuss the detail of how the visitor will deliver their sessions and ensure that the content is age-appropriate and accessible for the pupils.
- Ask to see in advance the materials visitors will use as well as a lesson plan so that collectively we can ensure it meets the full range of pupils' needs (e.g. special educational needs) and make sure these are available for parents/carers to view.
- Agree how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with our school's policy.

Monitor and evaluate the visitor input to inform future planning

PSHE will be taught through a range of teaching methodologies, including story-telling, drama, discussions, individual private reflection, quizzes and fact finding, value spectrums, debating, independent research and artistic presentations etc. This wide range of teaching strategies promotes engagement by all pupils, irrespective of preferred learning styles.

Curriculum

The majority of the curriculum is a statutory requirement to teach to meet Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (July 2025), whilst ensuring schools fulfil their duties under the Equality Act, 2010. PSHE also contributes towards the learner's citizenship education.

PSHE will be taught through a 'spiral curriculum'. This approach means that pupils will gain knowledge, develop values and acquire skills gradually by re-visiting core themes to build on prior learning. PSHE will support the school's commitment to safeguard pupils through an age-appropriate curriculum that prepares them to live safely in the modern world.

Our intended PSHE curriculum is detailed on our website **https://www.firleschool.co.uk** but may vary in response to emerging issues and to reflect the rapidly changing world in which our pupils are living and learning. Where possible the curriculum will be complemented by themed assemblies, topic days and cross curricular links.

In July 2025 the Department for Education launched the new Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education for implementation by September 2026. Whilst much of the curriculum remains the same as the previous guidance, and was already covered within our existing curriculum, some elements have been given more focus or clarification to reflect the current world that we live in.

Primary	**Secondary**
Online safety	Incel and misogyny
Personal & travel safety	Violence against women & girls (VAWG)
Grief, loss and bereavement	Online safety
Vaping	Personal & travel safety
	Grief, loss and bereavement
	Vaping

Assessment

Pupils' learning will be assessed throughout, through the use of baseline assessments at the start of lessons or topics as well as at the end of lessons or topics. This will ensure that pupils are making sufficient progress against their own starting points and to build on prior teaching and learning. It also enables us to check that teaching strategies and resources remain relevant and effective. Assessment will be implicit, forming part of a normal teaching activity to ensure that pupils do not feel under pressure and may include self-assessment tasks that will confirm pupils understanding of the topics. Information about these assessments and pupils progress will be shared with pupils and parents/carers as appropriate. **Pupils' learning will be assessed at the end of every topic to ensure that pupils are making sufficient progress to build on prior teaching and learning and that teaching strategies and resources remain relevant and effective. Assessment activities will be implicit, forming part of a normal teaching activity to ensure that pupils do not feel under pressure and will include self-assessment tasks that will confirm pupils understanding of the topics. The evaluation of teaching and learning assessments will be shared with pupils and parents as appropriate.**

The quality of RSHE teaching and learning will be monitored through RSHE learning walks, team teaching and informal drop-ins conducted by subject leads and/or members of the senior leadership team. The observations and findings of which will be used to identify and inform future staff training needs.

Responding to pupils' questions

There will always be sensitive and controversial issues within the subjects of PSHE. These may be a matter of age and stage appropriateness or contrasting personal beliefs including those originating from faith perspectives and culture. We believe that children are best educated and protected from harm when they are provided with a safe and supportive space to discuss issues openly within the framework of a class working agreement. At the end of every lesson, pupils will be provided with an opportunity to ask questions in an open setting and will also be provided with an opportunity to raise questions through the use of an 'ask it tool'. Teachers will answer questions as fully as they feel age and stage appropriate based on the level of knowledge demonstrated by pupils during the lesson and as set in the statutory guidance. Teachers may delay answering a pupil's question if they need time to consult with a colleague or the school leadership team to construct an appropriate answer.

Teachers can refuse to answer a question that they feel is inappropriate and will never answer personal questions about their own body, personal circumstances or lifestyle choices. If a teacher does not answer a question, the pupil will have the reasons clearly explained and the teacher will work with the pupil to identify suitable sources of information where they can obtain an answer to their question. This may include encouraging the pupil to ask a parent/carer or trusted adult at home.

Confidentiality, signposting and handling disclosures

The school's responsibility to safeguard pupils through a curriculum that prepares them to live safely in the modern world will remain central to our curriculum content, teaching methodologies and supporting resources.

At the beginning of PSHE teaching the class will discuss and create a **'working agreement'** Confidentiality will be included within this agreement so pupils are clear of the limits of confidentiality that can be guaranteed by a teacher.

Distancing techniques such as the use of characters within PSHE avoids pupils feeling under pressure to participate or disclose information beyond that which is appropriate or feels comfortable. This strategy makes PSHE more accessible to all pupils including those who may have experienced unhealthy relationships and/or abuse.

Teachers will signpost pupils to information relevant to the topic being taught to ensure safe sources of information, advice and guidance are provided. Teachers will also work closely with the school's pastoral system to advise on topic coverage so that the school can be responsive to pupil's pastoral needs and safeguarding arrangements can be actioned efficiently if required.

Teachers will conduct PSHE lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved (or being likely to be involved) in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the reference seriously, and deal with it as a matter of child

protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. They will immediately inform the named person for child protection issues about their concerns. The designated safeguarding lead will then deal with the matter in line with our school's safeguarding policy.

Supporting vulnerable learners

We are aware that pupils with SEND, specific needs/experiences or those with additional support may be more vulnerable than their peers to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual abuse, exploitation and violence, bullying and other issues. RSHE is particularly important for these pupils, particularly those with social, emotional and mental health needs or learning disabilities.

The school will ensure that, in line with our Teaching and Learning principles, resources and teaching materials are appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils, are accessible for all pupils, including those with SEND and are sensitive to pupils' needs.

The PSHE lead will liaising with the safeguarding team prior to delivery of sensitive content to ensure that learners who may have negative experiences or trauma relating to the content are appropriately supported.

Involving parents and carers

We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children in PSHE and that learning is most effective when it is collaboration between school and home. We therefore wish to build a positive and supportive relationship with parents and carers of children and young people at our school through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation.

The school will provide support to parents and carers through an annual workshop which provides a valuable opportunity to develop awareness of emerging topics and review the resources being used as well as consider ways to build on the learning at home, fostering strong channels of communication between parents/carers and their children. The school also operates an open-door policy enabling parents to discuss PSHE at relevant times throughout the school year.

The vast majority of PSHE is compulsory. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents and carers are only able to request that their child is excused from Sex Education, taught outside of the national curriculum for science. If a parent wishes their child to be excused, they should request a copy of the Right to Withdraw Policy, which outlines the steps. This will include a discussion with the school, making clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in. The key link teacher **Mrs Dyer** will outline to parents/carers the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes rather than what was directly said through delivery of quality assured resources. If the withdrawal

process is continued the parent/carer must complete a copy of the withdrawal form – the school will record its actions and hold a copy of the form on file.

This process is the same for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Headteacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision. If a pupil is excused from sex education, the school will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Links to other school policies and curriculum

This policy complements the following policies:

- Anti-bullying
- E-safety
- Equality
- Inclusion
- Safeguarding
- Teaching and learning