POLICY – Relationships and Sex / Sexuality Education

Education – England

Policy Author	Laura Dickie, Head of Policy Tonia Lewis, Education and Quality Improvement Lead
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Policy Approver	Jo Dunn, Compliance, Regulation and Quality Director
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Policy Level	Education
Staff groups affected	Wales and England Education

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the service's established governance and quality assurance systems. Responsibility for ensuring that the policy remains compliant with legislation and regulatory frameworks sits with the Proprietor Representative and Regional Lead.

A formal review of this policy will be undertaken no later than three years from the date of approval**,** or sooner if changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or operational requirements necessitate it.

The Head of Policy will support this process by identifying relevant changes in legislation, regulation, national standards and emerging best practice. The Head of Policy will also incorporate learning from inspections, audits and practice developments into future revisions whilst overseeing all proposed amendments to the universal content to ensure accuracy, consistency and compliance.

Andrew Sutherland
Representative, Proprietor- Cambian Group
February 2026

Sean Di Sora
Headteacher
February 2026

Terminology

Our aim is to use consistent terminology throughout this policy and all supporting documentation as follows:

Term	Definition
'Establishment' or 'Site'	A generic term referring to the school/college owned by CareTech.
Learner	Any child or young person under the age of 18, or young adult over 18 who receives education.
Service Head	The senior person with overall responsibility for the school/college.
Tutor/Teacher	Members of staff who have teaching responsibility for learners at the school/college.
Parent/Carer	Parent or person with parental responsibility.
Regulatory Authority	The independent regulatory body responsible for inspecting and regulating services (e.g., Ofsted, Estyn, Education Scotland).
Social Worker	The worker allocated to the individual learner; if none is allocated, the Duty Social Worker or Team Manager is responsible.
Placing Authority	The local authority/agency responsible for placing the learner or commissioning the service.
Local Authority	The local authority for the establishment's location.
Staff	All staff working at the location, including employed staff, students on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and proprietors.

1. Local School/College Profile

Linton School

Linton School is an independent special school for young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties for both boys and girls aged 8-18 years old. The school is registered for up to 12 learners and consists of 4 small classes to provide a nurturing environment to develop and progress throughout their learning journey. We are a trauma informed school that is able to support children and teenagers who suffer with trauma or mental health problems and whose troubled behaviour acts as a barrier to learning. Located in rural Preston we therefore benefit from some amazing outdoor space where we develop our outdoor, equestrian and horticulture skills. All the staff at Linton School are committed to creating a setting which not only focuses on academic success, but also provides our learners opportunities to develop their social, communication and independent skills

2. Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to **Linton School** and sets out the organisational standards for the safe, compliant and responsible provision of RSE Education.

It provides a universal framework and outlines the expectations that apply to:

- Staff
- Senior leaders
- Learners
- Visitors and contractors (where relevant)

This policy enables **Linton School** to meet statutory duties, uphold safeguarding responsibilities, comply with data protection requirements, and maintain high-quality provision.

3. Scope

This organisational policy applies across all education sites, services and functions. It establishes the universal standards and expectations that must be followed consistently throughout the organisation.

Each site implements these standards in accordance with the statutory and regulatory requirements of the nation in which it operates as set out in **Appendix A-C.**

4. Legal and Regulatory Context

Linton School is governed by the statutory duties, safeguarding requirements and inspection arrangements of the nation in which it operates. The universal standards in this policy are implemented in line with the correct national frameworks set out in **Appendices A–C**, which summarise the legal, regulatory and inspection requirements for England, Wales and Scotland.

5. Rationale

One of our core aims at Linton School is for all pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe, and build positive relationships with those around them. The RSE programme at our school/college is fundamental to enabling us to achieve this aim. We understand the importance of educating pupils about sex and relationships so they can make responsible and well-informed decisions in their lives. This is particularly important for our students who have exhibited harmful behaviour or experienced abusive relationships, loss and personal trauma.

England: *Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)* is learning about physical, moral and emotional development; the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care; and the teaching of sex, sexuality and health. At our school/college we teach RSE objectively, without prejudice and do not promote any form of sexual orientation.

Linton takes pride in offering a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, catering for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. PSHE/RSE is central to this and is delivered as a discrete subject. The majority of RSE is taught in these lessons, supported and complemented by work in other subjects and through the ethos of the school/college as a whole.

6. Aims and objectives

Our RSE programme enables pupils to develop their understanding of:

- Relationships of all kinds including friendships, family, online and intimate relationships;
- Sex and sexuality;
- The importance of family life;
- The biological facts related to human growth and development, including reproduction;
- Recognising and forming positive personal identities;
- Empathy and the ability to work with others;
- The interplay between relationships and mental wellbeing, including loss, separation, divorce and bereavement;
- Recognising and managing risks;
- Bullying;
- Knowing when and where to access help and support;
- The importance of healthy relationships and their characteristics.

7. Content of RSE programme

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with stakeholders including; parents, carers, pupils and staff, and, taking into account the age, developmental stage, needs and feelings of our pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so that pupils are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

Primary sex education is not compulsory in primary schools – Linton School will determine whether we need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of your pupils annually and linked to pupils needs. If Linton School decides to cover this, then primary sex education will focus on:

- Preparing boys and girls for the changes that adolescence brings
- How a baby is conceived and born

RSE is taught within the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in Religious Education (RE).

For primary school aged children relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

For secondary school aged RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBTQ+ parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents/carers, amongst other structures), along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, children looked after (CLA) or young carers).

We will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal political activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, hate crime, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs.

The PSHE/RSE programme follows the national curriculum to develop and embed key skills and knowledge over time. We follow the Jigsaw/PSHE Association programme and cover topics through thematic units.

Through our programme, learners will practice and develop personal, interpersonal and social skills; and explore, clarify and, sometimes, challenge their own and others' attitudes, values and moral reasoning.

Our programme is underpinned by statutory duties relating to safeguarding, equality, learner welfare and curriculum entitlement that requires RSE programme content to be factual, inclusive, age-and stage-appropriate that supports learners to:

- Understand healthy relationships, consent and personal boundaries
- Recognise abuse, coercion, exploitation and online harms
- Access sexual health information and support
- Understand the law relating to sexual behaviour, harmful practices and digital safety
- Develop respect, equality and inclusion in line with the Equality Act 2010

Teachers/tutors must ensure RSE is trauma-informed, accessible, and responsive to individual needs, particularly given the vulnerabilities of the learners in this setting.

Themes covered

- Difference and diversity, tolerance, equality, prejudice and stereotyping;
- Puberty, menstruation, masturbation and personal hygiene;
- Healthy relationships — keeping yourself safe from exploitation, coercion, peer pressure and gangs; local and national sexual health agencies and services;
- Online safety including youth-produced sexual imagery and forming relationships online;
- Sexuality; body image, body confidence and the media;
- Online harms, digital safety, misinformation and content risks;
- Violence against women and girls (VAWG) prevention;
- Positive masculinity/femininity and suicide prevention.

Some aspects of RSE are also delivered through the theme of Health and Wellbeing such as sexual health and contraception, consent and sexual bullying. This is taught in conjunction with science lessons and when appropriate for the young people due to histories of trauma. RSE is taught in a trauma-informed way and topics will not be removed unless essential.

The Science programme follows the National Curriculum Programme of Study for Science. In Key Stage 3 pupils learn the scientific facts surrounding sexual reproduction, including gametes, fertilisation, the male and female reproductive systems, puberty, the menstrual cycle, pregnancy and birth. Pupils will also learn about the legal age of consent, emotional and health aspects of sex and reasons to delay sexual activity. In Key Stage 4 develop knowledge of DNA, mitosis, meiosis and genetic inheritance. Knowledge is embedded through PSHE/RSE discussion and activities.

The content will be delivered through a variety of teaching methods and interactive activities including card sorts, quizzes, discussion, debate, educational film clips, imaginary case studies and real media events. Visitors and organisations may be invited to complement the programme.

By the end of KS2 children should know

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families and people who care about me	• That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability • The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives • That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care • That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up • That marriage represents 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 from others if needed
Caring friendships	• How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends • The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties • That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded • That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right • How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Respectful relationships	• The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • The conventions of courtesy and manners • The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness • That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help • What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive • The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults
Online relationships	• That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not • That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous • The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them • How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met • How information and data is shared and used online
Being safe	• What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context) • About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe • That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact • How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know • How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult • How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard • How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so • Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources

By the end of KS4 children should know

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families	• That there are different types of committed, stable relationships • How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children • What marriage is, including their legal status, e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony • Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into • The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships • The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting • How to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed
Respectful relationships, including friendships	• The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice) • That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help • That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control • What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable • The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Online and media	• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online • About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online • Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them • What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online • The impact of viewing harmful content • That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners • That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail • How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online
Being safe	• The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships • How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	• How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship • That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing • The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women • That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others • That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex • The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available • The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage • That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help) • How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing • About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment • How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour • How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

8. Creating a safe learning environment

RSE touches on sensitive issues which may provoke strong emotional reactions. Teachers create a climate of trust, cooperation and support. Classes establish Ground Rules covering respect; confidentiality and its limits; thinking carefully before sharing personal information; the right to leave the room; correct language use; and the right to decline to answer personal questions. Distancing techniques (imaginary scenarios, third-person discussion) will be used.

Teachers will be conscious of expressing personal views and will work within the school/college's values, policies and the law. Difficult questions may be deferred for considered responses. Consideration will be given to group size and dynamics and who is best placed to deliver particular content.

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of pupils will relate to them

- Is sensitive to all pupils' experiences
- During lessons, makes pupils feel:
- Safe and supported
- Able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

Make sure that pupils learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in:

- A whole-class setting
- Small groups or targeted sessions
- 1-to-1 discussions
- Digital formats
- Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

9. Diversity and inclusion

We recognise that pupils may be vulnerable to exploitation and unhealthy relationships. Certain aspects of RSE may be taught individually or at times agreed with Care and Therapy. Throughout the school day, every pupil has access to one-to-one support from a member of the Education Team. Support will be provided through tutor support and key-work sessions.

We are sensitive to religious and cultural views while ensuring pupils access the learning they need to stay safe and understand their rights. We include impartial scientific information on puberty, abortion and assisted conception, and cover the law on forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). Our PSHE/RSE programme covers equality and related legislation. The programme aims to foster gender and LGBTQ+ equality, challenge prejudice and bullying, and respect emerging sexual orientation and gender identity.

10. Right to be excused / withdrawn from sex education

England – Parents/carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. This right does not apply to relationships education, health education or science.

Parents/carers should make their request by emailing the Headteacher: ***sean.disora@lintonschool.co.uk***
Before granting any request the Headteacher will discuss it with the child's parents/carers, therapist, social worker and care team, and, as appropriate, with the child. A record will be kept of this process and the decisions made. The Headteacher will explain the benefits of receiving this education and any detrimental effects of withdrawal.

Except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents/carers' 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. There may be exceptional circumstances where the Headteacher takes a pupil's specific special educational needs into account when making this decision.

11. Monitoring

The RSE programme and policy are regularly evaluated and reviewed by the PSHE/RSE Lead. The views of learners, parents, staff and governors are used to make changes and improvements on an ongoing basis. Regulators expect to see sequenced curriculum intent, implementation evidence, staff training records and safeguarding documentation; lesson plans and learning journeys should be available to demonstrate alignment with statutory expectations.

Equality Impact Statement

This policy has been developed to promote equality, safeguard individual's rights, and ensure fair and inclusive practice across all services. The potential impact of the policy on children, young people, young adults, families, and staff with protected characteristics has been considered in line with the Equality Act 2010.

No negative impacts have been identified. Staff must apply this policy with sensitivity to individual need and make reasonable adjustments to ensure equitable access, safety, wellbeing, and participation for every individual. Any emerging risks of differential impact should be reported and addressed through ongoing review and quality assurance.

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher every year.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the Richard George, Regional Lead.

This policy will be due for renewal in December 2026.

Appendix A — England: Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Statutory RSE Requirements

- *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Guidance* (DfE 2019, updated 2025 for implementation 2026). *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance*

- *Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014* — including SMSC, welfare and information standards. *The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014*

- *RSE must be factual, age-appropriate and reflect English law on consent and the Sexual Offences Act 2003; child sexual exploitation and abuse; online safety and harmful content; domestic abuse and coercive control (Domestic Abuse Act 2021); forced marriage (Forced Marriage Act 2007); female genital mutilation (FGM Act 2003); sexual orientation and gender identity (Equality Act 2010).*

Safeguarding

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)* — statutory safeguarding duties for all education providers. Teachers/tutors must follow child protection procedures when disclosures arise through RSE. *Keeping children safe in education 2025*

Equality and Inclusion

- *Equality Act 2010* — duties to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations. RSE must be inclusive of all protected characteristics. *Equality Act 2010*

FE-Specific Requirements

- FE providers must meet safeguarding duties for under-18s and vulnerable adults. RSE for over-18s must remain safe, factual and aligned with safeguarding responsibilities.
- *FE and sixth-form colleges must follow KCSIE safeguarding duties; providers educating under-18s are subject to the Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act duties; the DfE RSE guidance and the FE RSE toolkit are recommended resources for post-16 RSE practice and curriculum design."*

Regulators and key expectations

- **Regulators: Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF)** *Education inspection framework (EIF) - GOV.UK*

- **Key expectations:** *curriculum sequencing mapped to DfE RSE guidance; DSL named and contactable; staff RSE/safeguarding training matrix; auditable disclosure/referral logs; parental-withdrawal records; evidence of curriculum intent, implementation and impact.*