POLICY – Relationships and Sex / Sexuality Education

Education – Wales and England

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Policy Approver	Jo Dunn, Compliance, Regulation and Quality Director
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Policy Level	Education
Staff groups affected	All 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.

ASalisbury

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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

Devon School is an independent specialist provision for students aged 10 to 16 with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. We provide a nurturing and supportive environment where students can access learning that is tailored to their individual needs. Our approach focuses not only on academic progress, but also on helping every student develop confidence, self-esteem, resilience and positive relationships. At Devon School, we believe that every young person deserves the opportunity to succeed and to discover their strengths in a safe and compassionate learning community.

At Devon School, our vision is to collaborate with students and families to create a respectful and compassionate school community. We aim to foster a lifelong love of learning, empowering everyone to become the best versions of themselves.

Our school community is guided by five core values that shape everything we do:

- Respect
- Honesty
- Responsibility
- Resilience
- Kindness

These values help us create a positive environment where students feel safe, valued and supported to grow.

2. Purpose and Scope

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

3. Scope (Universal Application)

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. Local Adaptation Requirement

Some sections in this policy are marked *Adapt Locally.* These sections are completed by each site to reflect local operational procedures or national equivalents (e.g., safeguarding framework, inspection remit, curriculum/quality framework, data protection contacts). **

Where England-specific statutory references appear in the universal policy, sites in Wales insert their own national equivalents into the marked *Adapt Locally sections.*

All local additions must be:
• Accurate
• Up to date
• Consistent with national legislation and regulator guidance
• Fully aligned with the universal standards in this policy

Where no local adaptation or local equivalent is required, the universal content remains fully applicable.

5. Legal and Regulatory Context (Universal)

Devon 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.

6.. Rationale

One of our core aims at Devon 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 we teach RSE objectively, without prejudice and do not promote any form of sexual orientation.

Devon School 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.

7. 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.

8. Content of RSE programme

The PSHE/RSE programme follows the national curriculum to develop and embed key skills and knowledge over time. We follow the Jigsaw 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 must ensure RSE is trauma-informed, accessible, and responsive to individual needs, particularly given the vulnerabilities of the learners in this setting.

Themes covered *Adapt locally*

- 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 the clinical team 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 pupils 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.

9. 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'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.

10. The role of the multi-agency team

Given the needs and vulnerabilities of our students, where appropriate, we will liaise with Clinical teams to share curriculum plans for each learner in advance. This allows clinical staff to advise on content that may cause particular issues and to follow up any matters arising from lessons. In some circumstances a pupil may be removed from group teaching for particular content and receive 1:1 sessions led by a therapist or key worker. Where pupils are removed from group teaching due to clinical need or safety, all statutory content will still be delivered individually in an accessible and developmentally appropriate way.

11. 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 therapy, 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 LGBT+ equality, challenge prejudice and bullying, and respect emerging sexual orientation and gender identity.

12. 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: abbi.salisbury@cambiangroup.com. 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.

13. Safeguarding and child protection

Effective RSE can lead to disclosures of child protection issues. The school Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures will be followed in all cases. Inspectors will expect to see DSL contact details, local referral routes and auditable logs of actions taken following disclosures. This policy requires staff to follow the school safeguarding procedures and to record and escalate any concerns immediately to the DSL.

14. 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 curriculum maps 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.

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 (2026)* — statutory safeguarding duties for all education providers. Teachers/tutors must follow child protection procedures when disclosures arise through RSE. Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK

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.

Appendix B — Wales: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Statutory RSE Requirements

- *Curriculum for Wales (2022)* and *RSE Code*— RSE is mandatory for all learners aged 3–16 and cannot be withdrawn from. RSE must be rights-based (UNCRC-aligned), inclusive, developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed. Content includes relationships, sexual health, rights and equity, bodily autonomy, safety and digital behaviours. *Curriculum for Wales - Hwb* *curriculum-for-wales-relationships-sexuality-education-code.pdf*

Safeguarding

- *Keeping Learners Safe (2022)* — statutory safeguarding guidance for all education providers. *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014* sets duties to protect children and vulnerable adults. Teachers/tutors must follow local safeguarding child protection procedures. *Keeping learners safe | GOV.WALES*

Equality and Inclusion

- *Equality Act 2010* applies in full. RSE must promote equality, challenge discrimination and support LGBT+ inclusion. https://education.gov.scot/resources/equality-act-2010/

FE-Specific Requirements

- FE sites must safeguard all learners under the *Education Act 2002* and Welsh safeguarding guidance. RSE for over-18s should remain factual, inclusive and aligned with wellbeing responsibilities. *The Education Act 2002 (Transitional Provisions) (Wales) Regulations 2002*
- FE follow local 16-18 curricula

Regulators and key expectations

- **Regulators:** Estyn; Welsh Government oversight for Curriculum for Wales. *Inspection - Estyn*

- **Key expectations:** alignment with the RSE Code and Curriculum for Wales; rights-based curriculum map per site; DSL named and local safeguarding partner contacts; training and evidence of phased learning outcomes; demonstrable mapping of lessons to statutory expectations