



IRONSTONE ACADEMY TRUST

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

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1. Scope and application

This policy has been reviewed and updated to reflect the Department for Education's 2025 Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance, which comes into effect from 1 September 2026, and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. KCSIE 2026 expects all staff, including those who do not work directly with children, to read Part one of the guidance and follow the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.

This policy should be read alongside the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy, SEND Policy, Equalities information, Anti-Bullying Policy, Attendance Policy, and any school-specific safeguarding procedures. It will be reviewed annually and sooner where statutory guidance, local safeguarding partnership expectations, or Trust-wide curriculum decisions require amendment.

- Department for Education: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance, July 2025, for implementation from 1 September 2026.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance statutory guidance.
- Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Education Act 2002, including section 80A.
- Education Act 1996, including section 403.
- DfE Science programmes of study: Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Relevant local safeguarding partnership procedures.

2. The consultation process that created this document involved:

Consultation, agreement, and implementation of this policy takes place at Trust and school level. Each school will ensure that pupils, parents and carers, staff, school leaders, and the Local Academy Committee have appropriate opportunities to understand and comment on the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum and associated policy arrangements.

In line with the DfE 2025 guidance, schools will be open and transparent with parents and carers about the content, sequencing, and resources used to teach RSHE. Parents and carers will be provided with accessible information about what is taught and when, including any content that goes beyond the statutory National Curriculum Science requirements. Schools will provide opportunities for parents and carers to discuss the curriculum, view resources where appropriate, and raise questions before sensitive content is taught.

The Trust Board retains strategic responsibility for ensuring that statutory requirements are met across the Trust. Local Academy Committees support school leaders by ensuring that the policy is understood, implemented, reviewed, and adapted appropriately to each school's context.

3. Purpose and vision for Relationships Education

“What is Sex Education at primary school?”

At Ironstone Academy Trust, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education form an important part of every child’s personal development, safeguarding education, and preparation for life in modern Britain. The curriculum supports pupils to understand healthy and respectful relationships, including family relationships, friendships, online relationships, personal boundaries, privacy, consent in age-appropriate contexts, and how to seek help if something worries them.

Relationships Education and Health Education are statutory for all primary-aged pupils. Sex education at primary school sits partly within the statutory National Curriculum Science requirements and partly within any additional content that each school chooses to teach as part of its planned RSHE curriculum. Schools do not teach pupils about sexual activity in a way that is inappropriate to their age or stage of development. Any additional primary sex education is carefully sequenced, age-appropriate, inclusive, and designed to support pupils’ understanding of bodies, puberty, reproduction, personal safety, and respectful relationships.

Effective RSHE supports safeguarding by helping pupils to recognise when relationships or behaviours are safe, respectful, appropriate, or concerning. It helps pupils develop confidence to use correct vocabulary, ask trusted adults for help, understand boundaries, identify unsafe contact or pressure, and recognise risks both offline and online.

The curriculum is delivered through a spiral approach so that pupils revisit key concepts over time, with increasing depth and maturity. Teaching is planned carefully so that pupils build knowledge progressively and are not exposed to content before they are ready. Teachers will respond proportionately to pupil questions, emerging safeguarding themes, local contextual risks, and issues affecting pupils, while maintaining clear boundaries about age-appropriate teaching. The curriculum also supports pupils’ wider health and wellbeing. This includes learning about physical health, mental wellbeing, puberty, emotions, bereavement and loss where appropriate, personal safety, online safety, respectful behaviour, and how to access support.

Within Ironstone Academy Trust, any primary sex education that goes beyond the statutory National Curriculum Science Programme of Study will be carefully planned, age-appropriate, and communicated clearly to parents and carers. This may include learning about:

- correct anatomical vocabulary, including external body parts, taught in an age-appropriate way to support safeguarding and help-seeking;
- puberty, physical and emotional changes, and personal hygiene;
- reproduction, where this is taught as part of the school’s planned upper Key Stage 2 curriculum;
- personal boundaries, privacy, consent in age-appropriate contexts, and respectful relationships;
- how to recognise inappropriate or unsafe behaviour, including online contact or pressure;
- how and where to seek help from trusted adults.

Schools will consider pupil maturity, SEND, vulnerability, and safeguarding context when planning delivery. Content will not be taught in response to a pupil question if it would be inappropriate for the wider class; in such cases, the matter may be followed up individually, with safeguarding procedures followed where necessary.

4. Principles and values

RSE should promote safeguarding, inclusion and personal development by helping pupils build the knowledge, language, confidence and values needed to form safe, respectful relationships and seek help when needed.

- provide an entitlement for all pupils, adapted to age, stage, SEND, vulnerability and local context;
- support family life, diversity, equality, respect, kindness and dignity;
- enable pupils to discuss sensitive issues safely, using clear ground rules and trusted adults;
- work in partnership with parents, carers and wider professionals where appropriate.

5. Aims

The aim of RSE is to provide accurate, balanced and age-appropriate learning about relationships, health, bodies, feelings, personal safety and respect. Pupils should be supported to:

- understand themselves and others, including physical and emotional development;
- develop self-respect, empathy, confidence and resilience;
- recognise safe, unsafe, respectful and inappropriate behaviour, including online;
- communicate appropriately, ask questions and seek help from trusted adults;
- make informed choices and understand the consequences of their actions.

6. Organisation and content of Sex and Relationship Education

Each school delivers Relationships Education, Health Education (and, where agreed, any additional primary sex education) through its PSHE curriculum, Science curriculum, Religious Education, wider pastoral provision, assemblies, and wider opportunities for personal development. The curriculum is planned progressively across year groups and is adapted to reflect the age, maturity, SEND, vulnerability, and safeguarding needs of pupils.

Relationships Education and Health Education are compulsory for all primary pupils. National Curriculum Science is compulsory and includes relevant teaching about the human body, growth, puberty, and reproduction in plants and animals. Any additional primary sex education is determined by the school, within the Trust policy framework, and is communicated clearly to parents and carers.

Teaching will be delivered by school staff who know the pupils well and understand the school's safeguarding context. External visitors or professionals may support aspects of delivery where this adds value, but the school remains responsible for curriculum content, safeguarding, quality assurance, and ensuring that teaching is age-appropriate, factual, balanced, and consistent with Trust values and statutory guidance.

Sensitive content will be taught using agreed ground rules that avoid inappropriate personal disclosure and support respectful discussion.

Pupil questions will be answered honestly, accurately and at an age-appropriate level. Where a question is not suitable for the whole class, it will be addressed individually and safeguarding procedures followed where necessary.

Staff will receive support and professional development so they can deliver RSHE confidently, safely and consistently.

Assessment will take place at appropriate points and will consider pupils' knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and confidence to seek help.

Year-group curriculum information will be set out in the school's PSHE curriculum overview and published or signposted through the school website.

7. Inclusion

Ethnic, cultural and religious groups

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic, cultural and religious groups. We encourage parents /carers to discuss any concerns with the Head of School. Before lessons which some groups may want to discuss, the content is available for parental/ carers to allow for an opportunity of discussion and clarification.

Pupils with special educational needs

We will ensure that all pupils receive relationship and sex education, and we will offer provision appropriate to the needs of all our pupils, taking specialist advice where necessary. Children with significant SEND needs are expected to understand the concepts of RSE at a 'stage appropriate' level and will be supported by specialist staff when appropriate.

Sexual orientation, family diversity and children who are questioning their gender

Teaching will be inclusive, respectful, and age-appropriate. Pupils will learn that families can take different forms, including single-parent families, adoptive families, foster families, kinship care, stepfamilies, families with same-sex parents, and other family arrangements in which children are loved and cared for. Teaching about families will be handled sensitively and will avoid suggesting that one type of family is better than another.

The curriculum will support pupils to value kindness, respect, dignity, and the lawful rights of others. Teaching will be consistent with the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty, DfE 2025 RSHE guidance, KCSIE 2026, and Trust safeguarding procedures.

Children who are questioning their gender may require sensitive, proportionate pastoral support. Any individual request or concern will be considered carefully by school leaders, with safeguarding, parental involvement, accurate record-keeping, the child's welfare, the rights and safety of other pupils, and relevant statutory guidance taken into account. Staff must not make individual commitments about arrangements without senior leadership involvement. Any safeguarding concern must be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

8. Right of withdrawal of pupils from Sex and Relationship Education

Parents and carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education, Health Education, or the statutory National Curriculum Science content, including learning about the human body, growth, puberty, and reproduction where this forms part of the Science Programme of Study. These areas are statutory and are essential to pupils' personal development, safeguarding, and preparation for later learning.

Parents and carers do have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from any sex education that is delivered outside the statutory National Curriculum Science requirements. Schools will make clear which aspects of the curriculum fall within statutory Science and which, if any, are additional primary sex education.

Where a parent or carer wishes to request withdrawal from additional primary sex education, they should contact the Headteacher or Head of School. The school will offer a discussion to clarify the curriculum content, explain the educational and safeguarding reasons for the teaching, respond to questions, and agree appropriate arrangements where withdrawal is confirmed. Alternative supervised provision will be arranged for pupils who are withdrawn.

Parents and carers are welcome to review relevant curriculum information and resources, subject to copyright, safeguarding considerations, and the need to maintain appropriate boundaries for pupils.

9. Confidentiality and safeguarding

Pupils will be told that adults in school cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality and that safeguarding concerns must be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The curriculum supports safeguarding by teaching pupils about privacy, rights, responsibilities, boundaries, respectful relationships and where to seek help. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children includes providing help and support as soon as problems emerge, protecting children from maltreatment whether within or outside the home, including online, preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development, ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care, and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Relationships Education, RSHE and Health Education support the Trust's wider safeguarding approach. In line with KCSIE 2026, schools will ensure that pupils are taught, in an age-appropriate way, about online safety and the risks that can arise through content, contact, conduct and commerce. This includes helping pupils understand respectful online behaviour, privacy, sharing information or images, unwanted contact, cyberbullying, harmful online influence, disinformation and misinformation, online misogyny, abuse facilitated by technology, and how to seek help.

Where age-appropriate and relevant to pupils' needs, schools will also address emerging risks linked to artificial intelligence, digitally altered images, deepfakes, harmful sexualised content, coercion, image-based abuse, and online harassment. In primary schools, this will be handled with particular care and will focus on prevention, safety, trusted adults, reporting concerns, and recognising when something online makes a child feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

All RSHE teaching must be consistent with the school's safeguarding procedures. Where a pupil makes a disclosure, asks a question that indicates potential harm, or raises a concern about

themselves or another child, staff must follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

10. Monitoring and evaluation of Sex and Relationship Education

Headteachers and senior leaders are responsible for monitoring RSHE as part of the school's wider curriculum and safeguarding quality assurance arrangements.

The Trust Board has strategic responsibility for ensuring that RSHE statutory duties are met across Ironstone Academy Trust. Local Academy Committees support this by seeking assurance that the policy is implemented effectively in each school, adapted appropriately to the local context, and reviewed annually. Headteachers and Heads of School are responsible for ensuring that the curriculum is planned, taught, assessed, and monitored effectively, and that parents and carers receive clear and accessible information about curriculum content.

The Trust Board, Local Academy Committees, Headteachers and Heads of School will seek assurance that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes;
- the subjects are well led, effectively managed, and well planned;
- the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;
- teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND;
- clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn;
- the subjects are resourced, staffed, and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations;
- the curriculum reflects the DfE 2025 RSHE guidance and is implemented from 1 September 2026;
- safeguarding, online safety, child-on-child abuse, mental wellbeing, and equality considerations are embedded appropriately;
- teaching is age-appropriate, carefully sequenced, factual, balanced, and responsive to local context;
- staff receive appropriate training and guidance to teach sensitive content confidently and safely;
- parents and carers are informed about curriculum content and have opportunities to discuss resources and raise questions;
- monitoring takes account of pupil voice, parent/carers feedback, staff confidence, safeguarding themes, and curriculum outcomes.

Signed:

CEO CF

Chair of Trustees: