



Thornbury Primary School

RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION / RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

Date policy last reviewed: September 2026

Signed by: (Headteacher) Emma Mantell

Policy development and review

This policy sets out how Thornbury Primary School provides Relationships Education and, where applicable, additional non-statutory sex education, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. It has been developed with regard to the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, revised July 2025 and effective from 1 September 2026.

The school will **proactively engage and consult parents** when developing and reviewing this policy and will also take account of the views of pupils, staff and governors/trustees. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where statutory guidance, safeguarding requirements, curriculum provision or the needs of pupils change.

The policy will be published on the school website and made available free of charge to anyone who requests a copy.

Statutory and legal framework

The school will have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance and comply with the statutory duties that apply to its setting. Relationships Education is compulsory for pupils receiving primary education. Health Education is also compulsory in state-funded primary schools (with the exception of independent schools, which have separate requirements).

- Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019.
- Education Act 1996 and Education Act 2002, including the requirement to have regard to statutory guidance.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Keeping children safe in education 2026 (in force from 1 September 2026), together with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, where relevant to safeguarding practice.
- DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance, July 2025, for implementation from 1 September 2026.
- National Curriculum requirements for science, including human growth, puberty and human reproduction where applicable.

Where this policy refers to statutory guidance, the school will keep its practice under review and amend the policy if the DfE or other competent authority publishes further statutory requirements.

Links with other school policies

This policy forms part of a whole-school approach to pupils' wellbeing, safety, personal development and positive relationships. It should be read alongside the school's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- SEND Policy / Accessibility Plan
- Confidentiality and Information-Sharing procedures
- Attendance Policy

Definition and aims

Relationships Education is learning about the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours that help pupils to form and sustain positive, respectful and safe relationships. It includes family relationships, caring friendships, respectful relationships, boundaries, online relationships and staying safe. It also helps pupils recognise risk, abuse, bullying and harmful behaviour and know how and where to seek help.

The aims of Relationships Education/RSE at Thornbury Primary School are to help pupils to:

- develop positive, caring and respectful relationships with others;
- understand their own rights, responsibilities, needs, preferences and boundaries and respect those of others;
- develop self-respect, self-esteem, resilience, honesty, kindness, empathy and trustworthiness;
- recognise healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviours and know how to respond to conflict safely;
- understand privacy, consent in age-appropriate contexts, personal boundaries and that each person's body belongs to them;
- recognise bullying, abuse, exploitation, harmful contact and harmful online behaviour, and know how to report concerns;
- understand that families can take different forms and that children should not be stigmatised because of their family circumstances;
- develop the knowledge and confidence to seek help from trusted adults and appropriate services;
- prepare for the next stage of education and, over time, for adult life and responsible citizenship.

Curriculum content and organisation

Relationships Education/RSE is delivered as part of the school's PSHE programme using the Kapow Primary RSE/PSHE scheme of work as the principal planning framework. The school will adapt the scheme where necessary to reflect the age, maturity, needs and circumstances of its pupils, local safeguarding information, school ethos and community context.

Teaching is sequenced progressively from EYFS to Year 6. Learning is age- and stage-appropriate and builds knowledge and skills over time. By the end of primary education, the programme will cover the statutory Relationships Education strands:

- Families and people who care for me – the importance of family, stable and caring relationships, different family structures, marriage/civil partnership, recognising when family relationships feel unsafe, and seeking help.
- Caring friendships – making and maintaining kind friendships, inclusion, loneliness, mutual respect, honesty, trust, conflict, repair and seeking support.
- Respectful, kind relationships – needs and preferences, healthy boundaries, communication, managing conflict and feelings, assertiveness, self-respect, diversity, manners, bullying, stereotypes and seeking help.
- Online safety and awareness – respectful online relationships, peer pressure, evaluating online relationships and information, age limits for social media, privacy, sharing information/images, harmful content/contact and reporting concerns.
- Being safe – appropriate boundaries, privacy, secrets and safety, body ownership, appropriate/inappropriate contact, safe responses to adults, harmful relationships, reporting abuse and seeking advice.

The curriculum will also reflect the DfE guidance that primary relationships education should include positive examples of different family structures, including same-sex parents, and should promote respect for others and protection from discrimination.

Sex education in primary school

Thornbury Primary School will teach only the sex education content that has been agreed through its curriculum development, Kapow scheme and parental consultation. The school will distinguish this clearly from statutory Relationships Education, Health Education and science.

Where additional non-statutory sex education is taught, it will be age-appropriate, carefully sequenced, factually accurate, respectful and consistent with the school's safeguarding responsibilities. The school will consult parents about its content and provide advance information about relevant lessons.

Delivery of RSE

Relationships Education/RSE is taught predominantly by teachers and other appropriately trained school staff within timetabled PSHE lessons.

Teaching will establish a safe, supportive and participative learning environment. This will include:

- agreed ground rules and boundaries for discussion;
- distancing techniques, scenarios and stories rather than requiring pupils to disclose personal experiences;
- age-appropriate and accessible resources;
- structured discussion, reflection, problem-solving and collaborative activities;
- anonymous question mechanisms where appropriate;
- clear signposting to trusted adults and support services;
- careful handling of sensitive questions and disclosures.

Teachers will answer questions honestly and factually within the scope of the curriculum and according to the age and maturity of the pupils. A teacher may defer, redirect or follow up a question privately where it is outside the planned curriculum, not age-appropriate, or better addressed with a parent/carer or trusted adult.

Managing questions outside the curriculum or withdrawn content

Pupils may ask questions about sex education topics that the school does not teach or from which a pupil has been withdrawn. Staff will respond calmly and supportively without introducing unplanned content.

- Where a question is outside the curriculum, the teacher will acknowledge it and explain that it is not part of the lesson.
- The pupil may be offered an opportunity to speak privately with a trusted adult or be signposted to an appropriate source of support.
- Where a question relates to content from which the pupil has been withdrawn, the teacher will not provide that withdrawn teaching in class and will ensure the matter is followed up appropriately.
- Parents/carers may be informed where appropriate, particularly where the question indicates a safeguarding, wellbeing or support need.
- Any safeguarding concern arising from a question, comment or disclosure will be dealt with immediately under the school's safeguarding procedures.

A suitable neutral response may be: **“That is an important question. It is not part of our learning today, so we are not going to explore it in class. If you are worried about anything, you can talk to me or another trusted adult privately.”**

Inclusion, equality and accessibility

The school is committed to an inclusive Relationships Education/RSE programme. Teaching will be accessible to all pupils, including pupils with SEND, additional needs, vulnerabilities or communication difficulties. Teachers will adapt language, resources, activities, grouping, pace and levels of support where necessary.

The school recognises that pupils have different ethnic, cultural, religious and family backgrounds. Teaching will acknowledge this diversity sensitively while remaining factual, age-appropriate and consistent with the law.

The school will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Pupils will be taught to respect others, including people who are different from them or who have different beliefs, backgrounds, preferences or family circumstances. The curriculum will challenge bullying, prejudice, derogatory language and stereotypes.

In accordance with the July 2025 DfE guidance, primary teaching will include positive recognition that families may take different forms, including families with same-sex parents. The school will distinguish factual teaching about biological sex and the law from contested views and will not present contested matters as established fact.

Where the school has a religious character, teaching may include its distinctive faith perspective on relationships, provided that the school is clear when a viewpoint reflects religious belief and continues to meet statutory requirements.

Safeguarding and confidentiality

Relationships Education/RSE is an important part of preventative safeguarding. Pupils will learn about boundaries, privacy, body ownership, harmful behaviour, bullying, online safety, abuse and how to seek help. Teaching will make clear that a child is never to blame for abuse.

Staff cannot promise unconditional confidentiality. Pupils will be told in an age-appropriate way that information may need to be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or another appropriate person if there is a concern about safety or wellbeing.

Any disclosure or safeguarding concern arising during RSE will be dealt with immediately under the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Staff will record and report concerns in accordance with school procedures and current KCSIE requirements.

The school will be particularly alert to the needs and vulnerabilities of pupils with SEND and other pupils who may be at increased risk of harmful sexual behaviour, sexual abuse, exploitation, violence or bullying.

Working with parents and carers

Parents and carers are important partners in Relationships Education/RSE. The school will be transparent about the curriculum, its purpose, the sequence of learning and the resources used.

- Parents will be proactively consulted when this policy is developed and reviewed.
- The policy and curriculum overview will be published on the school website and made available free of charge on request.
- Parents will be able to view curriculum materials used to teach RSHE on request, subject to safeguarding, copyright and data-protection considerations.
- Representative samples of resources will be shared where appropriate to help parents understand and support learning at home.
- Parents will be informed in advance about sex education content and about any significant departure from the published curriculum or policy.
- The school will welcome questions and provide opportunities for discussion, including meetings where appropriate.

Parents' right to request withdrawal from sex education

Parents have a legal right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all sex education delivered as part of the school's statutory RSE provision. In a primary school, the headteacher must automatically grant a request to withdraw from sex education, except for content that forms part of the National Curriculum for science.

There is no parental right to withdraw a pupil from Relationships Education or Health Education, or from relevant science teaching, including science content relating to puberty or sexual reproduction.

The school's withdrawal process is:

1. The parent/carer submits the request to the headteacher (preferably in writing).
2. The headteacher will normally discuss the request with the parent/carer, and with the pupil where appropriate, to explain the content, purpose and potential benefits of the teaching and to clarify any misunderstanding. The school will keep a record of this discussion.
3. Where the request concerns non-statutory primary sex education, the request will be granted.
4. The school will record the withdrawal and ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the lesson or period of withdrawal.
5. The pupil will not be withdrawn from statutory Relationships Education, Health Education or science content.

The school will ensure that pupils understand, where relevant, that a parent/carer has requested withdrawal and will handle this sensitively. From three terms before a pupil turns 16, pupils have the right to opt back into sex education; this is primarily relevant to secondary education but will be explained where applicable.

Roles and responsibilities

Governors/Trustees

- approve this policy and hold leaders to account for its implementation;
- ensure the school meets its statutory responsibilities;
- support the school's aims and inclusive approach.

Headteacher

- oversee implementation and review of this policy;
- ensure consistent delivery and appropriate staffing;
- manage parental withdrawal requests;
- ensure staff have appropriate training;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are managed under school procedures;
- ensure parents are informed and consulted as required.

PSHE/RSE Subject Lead

- oversee day-to-day curriculum planning and delivery;
- maintain the curriculum overview and ensure statutory coverage;
- support teachers with planning, resources and difficult questions;
- keep abreast of legislation, guidance and best practice;
- liaise with external providers;
- monitor, evaluate and report on provision.

Teachers and other staff

- teach in accordance with this policy and the curriculum;
- create safe, respectful learning environments;
- adapt teaching for individual needs;
- respond appropriately to questions and disclosures;
- follow safeguarding procedures and report concerns immediately;
- take part in relevant training and professional development.

Pupils

- participate appropriately in lessons;
- follow and contribute to agreed ground rules;
- treat others with respect and sensitivity;
- seek help when they have worries or concerns.

Parents/Carers

- support their child's learning and personal development;
- engage with consultation and information-sharing opportunities;
- contact the school with questions or concerns;
- work in partnership with the school to support age-appropriate learning.

Staff training and development

Staff delivering Relationships Education/RSE will have the knowledge, skills and confidence to create a safe and supportive environment and facilitate participative and interactive teaching. Training will include safeguarding, handling sensitive questions and recognising the increased possibility of disclosures.

RSE-related training will form part of the school's staff development programme. The subject lead will identify training needs through staff feedback, monitoring and changes to statutory guidance or local safeguarding priorities.

Monitoring, evaluation and assessment

The PSHE/RSE subject lead is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and impact of provision, reporting to the headteacher and governors/trustees as appropriate.

- planning and curriculum scrutiny;
- lesson observations and learning walks;
- work scrutiny;
- pupil voice;
- staff feedback and confidence checks;
- parent feedback and engagement;
- surveys or questionnaires where appropriate;
- review of relevant school-level safeguarding, behaviour, attendance or wellbeing information;
- review of curriculum coverage and progression.

Assessment will focus on pupils' knowledge, understanding, skills and ability to apply learning safely and respectfully. Assessment will not require pupils to disclose personal or family experiences.

Review and policy availability

This policy will be reviewed annually by Holly Rule (PSHE/RSE Lead) and Emma Mantell (Headteacher), with consultation with parents, pupils, staff and governors/trustees as appropriate. The next review is due September 2026. The policy will also be reviewed following any relevant change in statutory guidance, legislation, safeguarding requirements or curriculum provision.

The current policy will be published on the school website and a copy will be supplied free of charge on request.

Appendix 1 – Statutory Relationships Education coverage checklist

Statutory strand	Coverage	School evidence / location
Families and people who care for me	Families, stable/caring relationships, different family structures, marriage/civil partnership, recognising unsafe family relationships and seeking help.	[Kapow unit / lesson / curriculum map]
Caring friendships	Making and maintaining kind friendships, inclusion, loneliness, mutual respect, conflict, repair and support.	[Kapow unit / lesson / curriculum map]
Respectful, kind relationships	Needs and preferences, boundaries, communication, conflict, assertiveness, self-respect, diversity, bullying, stereotypes and help-seeking.	[Kapow unit / lesson / curriculum map]
Online safety and awareness	Respectful online interaction, peer	[Kapow unit / lesson / curriculum

Being safe	pressure, evaluating contacts/information, age limits, privacy, sharing images/information, harmful content/contact and reporting. Boundaries, privacy, safe/unsafe secrets, body ownership, appropriate/inappropriate contact, harmful relationships, reporting abuse and seeking advice.	map] [Kapow unit / lesson / curriculum map]
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Appendix 2 – Key references

- Department for Education (July 2025), Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: statutory guidance for introduction from 1 September 2026.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019.
- Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Education Act 1996 and Education Act 2002.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Keeping children safe in education 2026.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- National Curriculum in England – Science programmes of study.
- Kapow Primary, Relationships Education/Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) Policy Guidance, published 30 January 2026.