



Auckland College Independent School

Every Pupil Matters, Every Pupil Counts

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Policy





Document Control

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Applies to:	Whole School
Date effective from:	March 2026
Review period:	1 Year
Date of next review:	March 2027
Version:	V1



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Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Introduction

At Auckland College, we are committed to delivering high-quality Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in line with statutory requirements and government guidance.

As a Primary department, we are required to provide relationships education to all pupils under Section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. While we do not have to follow the National Curriculum, we ensure that our curriculum aligns closely with its principles, including the teaching of science, which incorporates essential elements of sex education. In delivering RSE, we adhere to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State, as outlined in Section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

Additionally, we fulfil our legal responsibilities under Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996, Part 6, Chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010, and the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), which requires us to promote equality, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relationships among all individuals.

As a secondary department, we are also required to provide RSE to all pupils under Section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Our teaching of RSE follows the statutory guidance set by the Secretary of State in accordance with Section 403 of the Education Act 1996. We uphold our legal obligations under Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996, Part 6, Chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010, and the Public Sector Equality Duty, ensuring that our curriculum supports inclusivity, respect, and the well-being of all pupils.

At Auckland College, we are dedicated to delivering RSE in accordance with this policy, ensuring that all pupils receive a well-rounded education that prepares them for healthy, respectful relationships and informed decision-making.

Scope

At Auckland College, our Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme aims to provide a comprehensive and supportive framework for discussing sensitive topics in an age-appropriate manner.

Our goal is to prepare pupils for the physical and emotional changes of puberty by fostering a clear understanding of sexual development, health, and hygiene. Through RSE, we strive to nurture self-respect, confidence, and empathy, ensuring that all pupils develop a positive sense of identity and well-being. We aim to create a school culture that promotes healthy, respectful relationships and informed choices regarding sexuality.

Additionally, we ensure that pupils are equipped with the correct vocabulary to accurately describe themselves and their bodies, enabling them to communicate effectively and with confidence in a safe and inclusive environment.

Content of the Policy and its Relationship to Other Policies

This RSE policy outlines the school's approach to teaching relationships and sex education, including its aims, legal obligations, curriculum content, delivery methods, parental involvement, and procedures for monitoring and review.

The guidance within this policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Anti bullying policy



- Cyber Bullying policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEND policy
- KCSIE
- PSHE policy

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board

- The governing board will hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- The governing board has delegated the approval of this policy to the Headteacher.

The headteacher

- The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, for sharing resources and materials with parents and carers, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory/non-science components of RSE.

Staff

- Staff are responsible for:
- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parent/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSE
- Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.

Pupils

- Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

Policy development and review

This policy has been developed to incorporate the perspectives of staff and pupils while aligning with guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

It has been developed through a collaborative process involving staff, pupils, and parents/carers. The consultation and development process followed these key steps:

1. **Review** – A designated staff member gathered all relevant information, including national and local guidance.
2. **Staff Consultation** – All school staff were given the opportunity to review the policy and provide feedback.
3. **Parent/Stakeholder Consultation** – Parents, carers, and other interested parties were invited to discuss and contribute to the policy.
4. **Pupil Consultation** – We explored pupils' perspectives to understand their needs and expectations for RSE.



5. **Ratification** – After necessary amendments, the policy was presented to the Directors for approval and formally ratified.

Any revisions will be informed by updates from the DfE and will be carried out through a consultative process involving all stakeholders, including parents.

The policy is reviewed every 12 months, and it is approved by the Headteacher.

Delivery of Relationship Education and RSE

In the Primary phase up to Year 4, Relationship Education is primarily taught by form teachers, with additional support provided in small group interventions by teaching assistants when needed.

From Year 5 to Year 11, various aspects of the RSE curriculum are delivered by teachers based on their subject expertise and specialisms as part of the broader wellbeing curriculum. The religious background of all pupils is considered when planning teaching, so that the topics that are included are appropriately handled.

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum.

Within Primary, relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

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

Within Secondary, 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, LGBT 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, looked-after children 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.

Use of Resources

We will consider whether any resources we plan to use:



- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our pupils
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to pupils' experiences and won't provoke distress

Inclusivity

We will approach these topics in a way that:

- Acknowledges and respects the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of all pupils
- Is sensitive to individual experiences
- Ensures that pupils feel:
 - Safe and supported
 - Able to engage meaningfully with key messages

Additionally, we will:

- Deliver lessons in settings that best support pupils' learning needs, which may include:
 - Whole-class discussions
 - Small group or targeted sessions
 - One-on-one conversations
 - Digital formats where appropriate
- Carefully consider the level of differentiation required to meet the needs of all pupils

The Law

Pupils will be taught factual, age-appropriate, and inclusive information about sex, sexuality, sexual health, and gender identity. The content will be designed to ensure all pupils feel it is relevant to them and their personal development.

Discussions may include perspectives from different faiths regarding relationships and sex. However, all teaching will align with legal requirements, including the Equality Act 2010, to ensure that young people have a clear understanding of what is permitted and prohibited under the law.

Support for SEND pupils

Auckland College is committed to ensuring that Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is accessible to all pupils. Some pupils on the SEND register may be particularly vulnerable and may require additional support to fully engage with the content.

To meet their needs, we will provide opportunities for further discussion in a one-on-one setting or small group sessions. Depending on the topic, these sessions may be delivered by the pupil's form tutor, year leader, or a suitably qualified external provider.

LGBTQ+

Auckland College is committed to meeting the needs of all pupils, regardless of gender. Pupils will be taught that sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender reassignment are protected



characteristics under the law. The importance of equality and respect for all will be emphasised in a clear and sensitive manner at appropriate points in the curriculum.

LGBTQ+ topics will be integrated throughout the RSE programme rather than treated as standalone subjects, ensuring a holistic and inclusive approach. Additionally, issues such as grooming, sexual exploitation, and domestic abuse—including coercive and controlling behaviour—will be addressed sensitively and clearly within the curriculum.

Ground Rules

Before delivering lessons on sexual relationships with older pupils, teachers should establish clear classroom expectations:

- No one (teacher or pupil) will be required to answer a personal question.
- Participation in discussions will be voluntary.
- Correct terminology will be used for all body parts.
- Definitions and concepts will be explained factually and sensitively.

By maintaining a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment, we ensure that RSE is delivered effectively, empowering pupils with the knowledge they need while upholding their dignity, safety, and wellbeing.

Primary Phase

For primary-age children, Relationships Education focuses on guiding them in developing healthy, respectful relationships, with an emphasis on friendships, family connections, and staying safe in their interactions.

Key topics covered in the primary phase include making and maintaining friendships, resolving conflicts, fostering inclusivity, supporting others when they feel upset or hurt, and understanding the qualities of a strong friendship. While sex education is not included in the primary curriculum, the PSHE programme addresses essential knowledge about puberty and the physical and emotional changes that occur during adolescence.

Relationships Education is a mandatory subject for all primary-aged pupils, playing a vital role in helping them grow into happy, confident, and responsible members of society. This learning is further supported by key aspects of Health Education, which is also delivered through the PSHE curriculum.

Throughout the primary phase, the pupils will learn about:

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
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
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Dealing with difficult questions

Primary-aged children may sometimes ask questions that extend beyond the age-appropriate content for their stage of development. The school will always respond in a way that is suitable for the age and maturity of the class while also considering the specific needs of SEND pupils. In some cases, individual support may be provided through one-on-one sessions for children who require more tailored guidance due to differences in maturity or ability compared to their peers.

Withdrawal from Relationship Education lessons in the primary phase

In addition to seeking parental input on the school's overall policy, primary parents will be consulted on the specific content of the curriculum. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from these lessons, as Relationships Education is a statutory requirement. The school will engage with parents through discussions and provide clear explanations of the rationale behind this approach.

Secondary Phase

For secondary-age students, Relationships Education encompasses learning about the physical, social, legal, and emotional aspects of human relationships, including friendships, intimate and committed relationships, sexual relationships, and family life.

Sex Education for secondary students involves understanding the physical, social, legal, and emotional aspects of human sexuality and behaviour, including human reproduction. This includes topics such as conception, contraception, safer sex, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and overall sexual health.

At Auckland College, we believe that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) should be delivered in an integrated manner, grounded in principles of gender equity and human rights. We ensure that lessons specifically covering sex education are clearly identified so that we can respect the wishes of parents who choose to withdraw their children from this content. At the same time, we aim to foster students' curiosity, promote their personal development, and encourage mutual respect for themselves and others.

Throughout the secondary phase pupils will continue to develop knowledge on topics specified from the primary curriculum as required and in addition learn:



Topic	What children will 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/carers 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
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)
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

Pupil voice

At Auckland College, pupil voice is integral to our culture and ethos. We actively use pupil feedback to assess the relevance and engagement of our RSE curriculum in relation to students' lives.

Throughout our RSE programme, we incorporate pupil voice practices, allowing students to share their perspectives on various topics while encouraging them to listen to different viewpoints, consider evidence, and reflect on their own beliefs with an open mind.



Our goal is to ensure that all pupils feel heard while maintaining a respectful and inclusive environment. Views that are hurtful, offensive, or exclusionary will not be allowed to dominate and will be appropriately addressed. We are committed to fostering a culture that upholds human rights, social justice, inclusion, and diversity.

Answering difficult questions

RSE covers a variety of topics that may prompt questions from pupils. We see these questions as a positive indication of engagement, demonstrating that pupils feel comfortable expressing their natural curiosity about themselves, their bodies, and their relationships with others.

Whenever possible, if a question is relevant to the entire class, it will be addressed in a group setting. However, some questions may be more appropriate for discussion outside of the classroom setting.

All questions will be answered in a manner that is age-appropriate and developmentally suitable. Additionally, we will respect any parental or carer requests for their child to be withdrawn from sex education lessons.

School staff are not required to answer personal questions about themselves, nor will they ask students direct personal questions that could create discomfort or vulnerability.

We believe that fostering an open environment for discussion helps prevent pupils from accessing inaccurate or harmful information from unreliable sources. Addressing sensitive topics with the whole class can also help to reduce stigma and shame. Most importantly, we believe that when children can openly discuss these issues with trained professionals in a safe environment, they are better protected from harm and abuse.

Right to withdraw Secondary age children

Parents and carers **do not** have the right to withdraw their child from **Relationships Education**, as the topics covered—such as family, friendships, and safety (including online safety)—are considered essential for all children.

However, parents do have the right to withdraw their child from the **non-statutory, non-science components of sex education** within RSE. Requests for withdrawal must be submitted in writing and addressed to the Headteacher.

If a withdrawal request is made, the Headteacher will meet with the parents to discuss the content of the programme, its educational value, and the benefits of participation. If parents still choose to withdraw their child, the request will be respected, recorded, and alternative educational activities will be provided.

From **three terms before their 16th birthday**, if a withdrawn pupil wishes to receive sex education, the school will ensure they have access to appropriate lessons during one of those terms.

This policy aligns with the Department for Education's guidance and should be considered alongside the school's **Safeguarding Policy**.

The wellbeing of pupils is the school's primary concern in all discussions on relationships and sex education. These topics may lead to disclosures or concerns being raised. If this occurs, staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures as outlined in the Safeguarding Policy.



Key principles regarding confidentiality:

- Teachers cannot offer absolute confidentiality in matters related to relationships and sex.
- If a pupil shares a personal concern, teachers should direct them to professional services that offer confidential support, such as a sexual health nurse or GP.

For pupils aged 11 and above, the most common request for confidentiality relates to engaging in or considering sexual activity. Pupils should be encouraged to speak with their parents or carers, but where this is not possible, they should be informed that health professionals are legally permitted to provide confidential advice and treatment in some cases, often as part of a counselling approach.

If a younger pupil (below the age of consent) discloses sexual activity, this is considered a child protection issue and must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL will make appropriate and sensitive arrangements, including informing parents/carers and ensuring the pupil and their family receive the necessary support.

If a pupil discloses sensitive information at an inappropriate time or place, the teacher should arrange to speak with them privately before the end of the school day. In the meantime, the teacher may consult a colleague or, if necessary, follow the Child Protection Policy.

The Use of External Organisations and Materials

Auckland College will ensure that any external agencies and materials used in RSE align with our legal responsibilities, including maintaining political impartiality. The school remains accountable for all content delivered to pupils, ensuring that speakers, resources, and teaching materials uphold fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs.

To maintain these standards, we will:

- Conduct appropriate checks and engage only with external agencies that provide a balanced approach to RSE. All resources used must:
 - Be age-appropriate
 - Align with pupils' developmental stages
 - Comply with:
 - This policy
 - The Teachers' Standards
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - The Human Rights Act 1998
 - The Education Act 1996
- Only collaborate with agencies in which we have full confidence regarding their approach, materials, and expertise.
- Ensure that external speakers and resources directly support the intended learning outcomes of the curriculum.
- Review case study materials and seek feedback from others who have worked with the agency.
- Clearly understand and evaluate:
 - What the speaker intends to discuss
 - Their stance on the topics covered



- Request and review all materials in advance.
- Identify and vet named individuals attending the session, following safeguarding procedures.
- Conduct an online search to address any potential concerns for the school, parents, or carers.
- Verify the agency's policies on taking photos or handling personal data collected during the session.
- Remind teachers that they have the right to decline participation or, in extreme cases, halt a session.
- Ensure that a teacher is present in the room during any session involving external speakers.
- Share all external materials with parents and carers.

Under no circumstances will we:

- Work with external agencies that promote or endorse extreme political views.
- Use materials from such agencies, even if the content itself appears neutral.

Health Professionals

Health professionals are required to uphold confidentiality in accordance with their professional codes of conduct. When working within classroom settings, they must also adhere to the school's policies. To maintain privacy and prevent inappropriate personal disclosures, they should establish clear ground rules in advance.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) regularly review the RSE curriculum to ensure:

- High-quality and consistent teaching
- Compliance with national Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education guidelines
- That learning outcomes align with pupils' needs

The delivery methods, effectiveness, and teaching materials are also assessed to maintain high standards.

Ongoing evaluation is essential for continuous improvement. This process includes both structured and informal feedback from pupils and staff, gathered through:

- Teacher evaluations of individual lessons and the overall RSE programme
- Lesson observations and Learning Walks
- Pupil feedback, including interviews, surveys, focus groups, and anonymous question boxes
- Review of pupil assessment records from Exit Tickets and Quizzes conducted in lessons.
- Sampling and analysis of pupil work

This structured approach ensures that the RSE programme remains engaging, relevant, and effective in supporting pupils' personal development.