



Auckland College Independent School

Every Pupil Matters. Every Moment Counts

PSHE and RSE Policy





Document Control

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Personal Social Health and Economic Education and Relationships and Sex Education Policy

This policy explains how Auckland College Independent School provides personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), Relationships Education for pupils receiving primary education, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for pupils receiving secondary education.

It sets out a coherent whole-school curriculum that develops pupils' knowledge, character and practical skills for safe, healthy and responsible life in modern British society.

Policy status and legal framework

Auckland College has regard to the Department for Education statutory guidance Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education, revised in July 2025 and effective from 1 September 2026.

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, require Relationships Education for all pupils receiving primary education and RSE for all pupils receiving secondary education.

As an independent school, Auckland College must provide personal, social, health and economic education under paragraph 2(2)(d) of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society under paragraph 2(2)(i).

The statutory Health Education requirements do not apply to independent schools in the same way as they apply to maintained schools and academies; however, the school uses the DfE health and wellbeing content as an important framework within its PSHE programme.

The school complies with the Equality Act 2010, including the provisions applying to schools in Part 6, Chapter 1, and the Independent School Standards relating to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teaching will not discriminate against or harass pupils. Pupils will learn about equality and the protected characteristics at an age-appropriate point and, by the end of secondary education, about the law relating to all protected characteristics.

This policy should be read with the Child Protection and Safeguarding, Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Online Safety, SEND, Curriculum, Careers, Equality and Visiting Speakers policies, together with current Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance.

Aims

- Provide accurate, evidence-based and age- and stage-appropriate knowledge about relationships, safety, sexuality, sexual health and wellbeing.
- Help pupils build positive relationships based on kindness, care, respect, honesty, consent and appropriate boundaries.
- Give pupils the vocabulary and confidence to describe their bodies, recognise unsafe or abusive behaviour, seek help and report concerns.
- Develop self-respect, confidence, resilience, empathy and respect for people whose lives, families, beliefs or characteristics differ from their own.
- Help pupils evaluate online content and relationships, resist pressure and make informed and ethical decisions.
- Ensure teaching is inclusive, accessible to pupils with SEND and responsive to the school's local context and safeguarding information.
- Prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life, including economic wellbeing, careers, citizenship and participation in British society.



Definitions and curriculum boundaries

PSHE is the planned programme through which pupils develop the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to manage their lives now and in the future. It includes health and wellbeing, relationships, personal safety, economic wellbeing, careers, citizenship and preparation for adulthood. PSHE is compulsory at Auckland College under the Independent School Standards.

Relationships Education is compulsory for pupils receiving primary education. It develops the knowledge and skills needed for caring friendships, safe and happy family life, respectful relationships, online safety, privacy, boundaries and recognising and reporting abuse. It does not describe the detail of sexual activity.

Primary sex education is any additional sex education provided beyond Relationships Education and the science curriculum. Auckland College teaches factual, age-appropriate content about conception and birth in Years 5 and/or 6. Parents will be consulted about this content and informed before it is taught. Parents may request withdrawal from this additional content, but not from Relationships Education or science.

Secondary RSE is compulsory and builds progressively on primary learning. It includes relationships, consent, safety, intimate and sexual relationships, sexual health and relevant law. Parents may request withdrawal only from some or all sex education delivered as part of RSE, subject to the arrangements in section 11.

Biological content, including puberty and sexual reproduction, may be taught through science. Pupils cannot be withdrawn from the science curriculum.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body and proprietor will ensure the policy and curriculum meet statutory requirements, that teaching is accessible to all pupils, and that appropriate information is available to parents. The Chair of Governors approves this policy following consultation and recommendation by the Headteacher.

The Headteacher is accountable for implementation, staffing, training, curriculum quality, parental engagement and decisions about secondary withdrawal requests. The Headteacher will ensure that the policy is published on the school website and supplied free of charge on request.

The Personal Development and RSE lead coordinates the curriculum, resources, staff guidance, assessment, monitoring and communication with parents. The Designated Safeguarding Lead advises on safeguarding content, vulnerabilities, disclosures and local risks.

Teachers and other staff must deliver agreed content sensitively and accurately, establish safe learning conditions, make reasonable adjustments, assess learning and follow safeguarding procedures. Staff cannot opt out of teaching RSE; concerns about confidence, training or content must be raised with the Headteacher or RSE lead.

Pupils are expected to participate appropriately, respect the rights and views of others and follow agreed ground rules. No pupil will be required to disclose personal experiences or beliefs.

Curriculum organisation and delivery

RSE is taught through the planned PSHE and personal development curriculum, with linked biological content taught through science and relevant reinforcement through computing, PE, citizenship and other subjects. Teaching is sequenced from the early years to Year 11 and is adapted in response to assessment, pupil voice, safeguarding information and emerging local or national risks.

In the primary phase, form teachers normally deliver Relationships Education, supported where appropriate by trained staff. From Year 5 to Year 11, teachers with suitable knowledge and confidence deliver agreed units. External specialists may supplement but do not replace the school's planned curriculum or accountability.

The school maintains a year-by-year curriculum map showing what is taught, when it is taught and who delivers it. Parents will be told in advance when sex education is due to be taught. Material changes from the published programme will be communicated to parents in advance wherever practicable.



Wider PSHE curriculum

Alongside Relationships Education and RSE, the PSHE curriculum covers the following interconnected areas. Content is introduced at an appropriate point, revisited with increasing depth and adapted to pupils' maturity, needs and lived context.

Curriculum area	Coverage across the school
Health and wellbeing	Mental and emotional wellbeing; recognising feelings; resilience; healthy routines; sleep; nutrition; physical activity; dental health; puberty; menstrual and gynaecological health; reproductive health; body image; first aid; health services; medicines; vaccination and prevention.
Drugs and risk	Factual education about medicines, alcohol, smoking, nicotine, vaping and illegal drugs; legal and health consequences; peer pressure; drink spiking; counterfeit substances; risk reduction and sources of support.
Online and media literacy	Privacy and data; misinformation and disinformation; algorithms and targeted content; scams, fraud and exploitation; harmful content; social media; gaming; gambling; pornography; AI-generated material; reporting and support.
Personal safety	Road, rail, water and public-space safety; emergencies and basic first aid; consent and boundaries; abuse, exploitation and grooming; county lines; gangs; weapons; radicalisation; hate crime; seeking help for oneself or others.
Economic wellbeing	Needs and wants; money choices; budgeting, saving and borrowing; risk and reward; debt; tax; financial products; consumer rights; online purchases, scams and fraud; links between money, work and wellbeing.
Careers and future pathways	Strengths, interests and aspirations; encounters with education and employment; labour-market information; qualifications and pathways; applications and interviews; workplace conduct and rights; challenging stereotypes; transition and preparation for adulthood.
Citizenship and life in British society	Democracy; rule of law; individual liberty; mutual respect and tolerance; protected characteristics; rights and responsibilities; respectful debate; community participation; public institutions; media literacy and political impartiality.

Sensitive health topics such as eating disorders, self-harm and suicide prevention will only be taught using reliable evidence, suitably trained staff and specialist advice. Teaching will avoid descriptions of methods, romanticising language or material likely to cause harm. Any concern or disclosure will be managed through safeguarding procedures.

Primary Relationships Education curriculum

By the end of primary education, pupils will have been taught the following areas in a carefully sequenced and age-appropriate way:

Area	Core knowledge and skills
Families and people who care for me	Safe and happy family life; different family arrangements, including same-sex parents; marriage and civil partnerships; stability, care and seeking help when a family relationship feels unsafe.
Caring friendships	Making and sustaining kind friendships; honesty, trust and loyalty; loneliness; managing conflict and difficult feelings; recognising unhealthy friendships and seeking support.
Respectful and kind relationships	Respect, self-respect, courtesy, assertiveness, boundaries, stereotypes, bullying, balancing needs and preferences, and distinguishing kindness from neglecting one's own needs.
Online safety and awareness	Respectful online behaviour; fake identities; harmful contact and content; pressure to share information or images; privacy and location settings; the minimum age for social-media services; reporting concerns.
Being safe	Body ownership; correct anatomical vocabulary; privacy and secrets; appropriate and unsafe contact; recognising emotional, physical and sexual abuse; identifying trusted adults; reporting concerns and continuing to seek help until heard.

Preventative teaching will be introduced without causing unreasonable alarm or suggesting that risky behaviour is normal. Pupils will be taught clearly that abuse is never the child's fault. Where local or



individual circumstances require additional content, parents will be informed and relevant materials will be available on request.

Secondary Relationships and Sex Education curriculum

Secondary RSE continues and deepens primary learning. By the end of secondary education, pupils will have been taught the following:

Area	Core knowledge and skills
Families	Committed and stable relationships; marriage and civil partnerships; the myth of common-law marriage; forced marriage and the legal minimum age of marriage; changing family relationships; parenting and seeking help when relationships are unsafe.
Respectful relationships	Healthy relationships; boundaries, privacy and consent; managing conflict and relationship breakdown; stereotypes; bullying; sexism, misogyny and homophobia; sexual harassment, sexual violence, coercive control, stalking, harmful sexual behaviour and relevant support.
Online and media	AI-created content, fake accounts, deepfakes and AI-generated sexual imagery; image sharing; pornography; sextortion; scams; grooming; online abuse; misogynistic and violent content; fake intimacy involving chatbots; reporting and support.
Being safe	Recognising and communicating consent and boundaries; resisting and avoiding pressure; public-space safety; drink spiking; exploitation, grooming, abuse, rape, FGM, forced marriage, honour-based abuse, virginity testing and hymenoplasty; victim-blaming and access to help.
Intimate and sexual relationships	Characteristics of healthy intimate relationships; readiness and the choice to delay sex; contraception; fertility; pregnancy, miscarriage and pregnancy options, including adoption and abortion; STIs including HIV; safer sex; the effects of alcohol and drugs; accessing confidential advice and treatment.
Law and equality	Age of consent; sexual offences; domestic abuse; image-based abuse; public sexual harassment; the Online Safety Act; protected characteristics; hate crime; medical consent and Gillick competence; rights and responsibilities.

Teaching will make clear that consent is necessary but that ethical and healthy relationships also require kindness, care and respect. It will not encourage or normalise early sexual experimentation. Pupils will learn that anyone can experience sexual violence, while recognising its disproportionate impact on women and girls and avoiding language that stereotypes boys or men as inevitable perpetrators.

Equality LGBT content and contested issues

Teaching will reflect the diversity of pupils and families positively and sensitively. Same-sex parents will be included alongside other family arrangements in primary teaching. At secondary, pupils will have equal opportunities to consider the features of safe and healthy same-sex relationships, and relevant content will be integrated rather than delivered only as a standalone lesson.

By the end of secondary education, pupils will learn the facts and law about biological sex, sexual orientation and the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. They will learn that people with protected characteristics are protected from discrimination and must be treated with respect and dignity.

Staff will not present contested views as established fact. In particular, the school will not teach as fact that all people have a gender identity or suggest that social transition is a simple solution to distress or discomfort. Teaching will avoid reinforcing sex-based stereotypes, remain impartial where debate exists, and allow respectful discussion without permitting bullying, harassment or discriminatory language.

The religious backgrounds and beliefs of pupils will be respected. Faith perspectives may be discussed and will be identified clearly as religious beliefs rather than presented as the law or as universally held views.

SEND vulnerability and inclusion

Teaching will be accessible to pupils with SEND and support preparation for adulthood. Staff will use reasonable adjustments such as adapted vocabulary and resources, pre-teaching, visual supports, additional



processing time, smaller-group teaching or individual follow-up where appropriate. Adjustments will preserve the essential safeguarding knowledge each pupil needs.

The school recognises that some pupils with SEND may be more vulnerable to bullying, harmful sexual behaviour, exploitation, sexual abuse and violence. Planning will take account of individual communication needs, maturity, lived experience and vulnerabilities in consultation with the SENCO and DSL where appropriate. Pupils will not be singled out or required to disclose personal information during lessons.

Safe teaching questions and confidentiality

- No pupil or member of staff will be required to answer a personal question or disclose personal experiences.
- Correct and factual terminology will be used, and discussion will remain respectful.
- Teachers may use distancing techniques, scenarios and anonymous question boxes.
- Questions will normally be answered honestly at an age- and developmentally appropriate level. Questions not suitable for whole-class discussion may be answered privately, deferred for consultation with the RSE lead or DSL, or supported through a trusted adult or appropriate service.
- A withdrawn pupil's question will be handled supportively without deliberately delivering the sex education from which the pupil has been withdrawn.
- Staff will explain that confidentiality cannot be promised where a pupil may be at risk of harm.

Parental engagement and withdrawal

The school will engage and consult parents when developing or reviewing this policy and curriculum. Parents will receive clear information about what will be taught, when sex education will occur and how to discuss learning at home.

Parents cannot withdraw a pupil from Relationships Education, content taught through science, or the school's wider PSHE provision that is not sex education.

In primary, the Headteacher must grant a written request to withdraw a pupil from additional sex education, except for content taught as part of science. In secondary, parents may request withdrawal from some or all sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. The Headteacher will normally meet with the parent and, where appropriate, the pupil to clarify the request, explain the curriculum and consider the educational, social and emotional effects of withdrawal. The discussion and decision will be recorded. A secondary request may be refused only in exceptional circumstances, for example where there are safeguarding concerns or a specific vulnerability.

From three terms before a pupil turns 16, the pupil may choose to receive sex education despite an earlier parental request. The school will ensure pupils know about this right and will arrange teaching during one of those terms. Any withdrawn pupil will receive appropriate and purposeful education during the lesson.

Openness about materials

Parents may request to view all RSE curriculum and teaching materials, including materials produced by external organisations. Requests should be made to the Headteacher or RSE lead. The school will provide access through a secure digital portal, a presentation, supervised viewing or copies where appropriate.

Copyright will be respected through acknowledgement, controlled access and restrictions on copying or onward sharing, but it will not be used as a reason to refuse parental access. The school will inform parents in advance about external providers and will make their relevant materials available on request.

Resources and external organisations

The school remains responsible for all teaching delivered by external organisations. Before use, the RSE lead will check credentials, lesson plans and materials for accuracy, evidence, impartiality, age and stage suitability,



accessibility, safeguarding, data protection, political impartiality and consistency with this policy. A suitably trained member of school staff will remain present.

External materials addressing biological sex or gender reassignment will not oversimplify contested matters, reinforce stereotypes or encourage pupils to question their gender. Parents will be consulted in advance about external resources on this topic and all materials will be available on request.

Visitors will receive the school's safeguarding and confidentiality expectations. Arrangements for handling disclosures will be agreed before the session. The supervising teacher may intervene or stop a session where content is unsuitable or safeguarding expectations are not met.

Safeguarding and disclosures

RSE may lead pupils to raise concerns or make disclosures. Staff must not promise confidentiality. Any concern about a pupil's welfare, including sexual activity, harmful sexual behaviour, abuse, exploitation, coercion, image sharing or online harm, must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy and managed in accordance with the Child Protection Policy and current statutory safeguarding guidance.

Decisions about informing parents or carers will be made by the DSL, taking account of the pupil's safety, wishes, age and circumstances. Parents will not be informed where doing so could place a child at increased risk, impede a safeguarding response or otherwise be contrary to the child's best interests. Information will be shared only with those who need it to protect and support the pupil.

Staff must act immediately on welfare concerns, follow mandatory reporting duties including those relating to FGM, and understand current law concerning child sexual abuse, virginity testing and hymenoplasty. Where a pupil needs health advice, staff may signpost appropriate services but will not attempt to provide clinical advice.

Assessment monitoring and evaluation

Assessment will identify what pupils know, can explain and can apply, including misconceptions and areas requiring further teaching. Methods may include baseline activities, discussion, scenarios, quizzes, exit tickets, pupil reflection and appropriately anonymised work. Pupils will not be assessed on personal beliefs or experiences.

The RSE lead and Senior Leadership Team will monitor curriculum coverage, sequencing, teaching quality, inclusion, resources and pupil outcomes through planning reviews, learning walks, work scrutiny, assessment information, pupil voice, staff evaluation and parental feedback. Findings will inform curriculum development, staff training and governance reporting.

The governing body will receive sufficient information to assure itself that statutory content is covered, teaching is accessible and age appropriate, materials are suitable, parents are engaged and safeguarding responsibilities are met.

Policy development publication and review

This policy has been developed through review of statutory and relevant non-statutory guidance and consultation with staff, pupils, parents and governors. It will be published on the school website and provided free of charge to anyone who requests it.

The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner following changes to legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding risks or the curriculum. The Headteacher will recommend revisions following consultation, and the Chair of Governors will approve the policy on behalf of the governing body.



Appendix 1 Key references

- Department for Education: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance, revised July 2025 and effective 1 September 2026.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019.
- Children and Social Work Act 2017, sections 34 and 35.
- Education Act 1996, including sections 403, 406 and 407.
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- Equality Act 2010, Part 6, Chapter 1.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children, current versions.
- SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years.