

# The Cornwall Independent School

## Relationships and Sex Education Policy

*This policy, which applies to the whole school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), is publicly available on the school website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office.*

**Scope:** All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours, including activities away from school. All new employees and volunteers are required to state that they have read, understood and will abide by this policy and its procedural documents

**Legal Status:** Complies with The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations currently in force.

**Monitoring and Review:** These arrangements are subject to continuous monitoring, refinement, and audit by the Headteacher. The Advisory Board will undertake a full annual review of this document, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been implemented. This review will be formally documented in writing. Any deficiencies or weaknesses recognised in arrangements or procedures will be remedied immediately and without delay. All staff will be informed of the updated/reviewed arrangements, and it will be made available to them in writing or electronically.

Reviewed: September 2025

Next Review: September 2026

Signed:



Miss L. Adams  
Headteacher



Mr Stephen Beck  
Chair of the Advisory Board

Mr Bill Brown  
Education and Compliance Adviser

Rationale: It is recognised that RSE is a cross-curricular area, which impinges on all aspects of students' personal and social education and development. At The Cornwall Independent School, we have a responsibility to provide education on relationships, health and wellbeing and sex education. This education is available to all pupils. A whole School approach to RSE is adopted. This incorporates aspects of the School ethos and organisation and enables effective pastoral support.

The Cornwall Independent School is committed to the teaching of relationships education to provide an understanding and lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It ought to provide knowledge about the processes of reproduction and the nature of sexuality and relationships in a responsible and healthy manner. Due to the nature of the subject, this policy should be read and implemented in conjunction with other existing, related policies, including PSHE & Citizenship, Teaching and Learning and Equal Opportunities.

### **What Is Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)?**

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes. Effective Relationship and Sex Education does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It teaches young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, to build up their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. It builds up knowledge and skills which are particularly important today because of the many different and conflicting pressures on young people.

**Relationships Education (KS1-2) – Definition:** Relationships Education is the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other peers and adults. This starts with pupils being taught about what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who the people are who can support them. From the beginning of primary school, building on early education, children should be taught how to take turns, how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect, the importance of honesty and truthfulness, permission seeking and giving, and the concept of personal privacy.

### **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE): KS3-4 – Definition:**

The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It will enable pupils to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage, civil partnership or other type of committed relationship. RSE will also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

### **Health (Physical and Mental wellbeing) Education (See our PSHE&C Policy) – Definition:**

The aim of teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing is to give them the information that they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing, recognise issues in themselves and others and, when issues arise, seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources.

### **Principles and Values**

In addition, The Cornwall Independent School believes that RSE should be:

- an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continue into adult life.
- an entitlement for all young people
- encourage each student to contribute to our community and aim to support each other as they grow and learn
- set within the wider school context and support family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness
- encourage students and teachers to share and respect each other's views. The important values are love, respect and care for each other
- generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.
- recognise that parents are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents and students, consulting them about the way these topics are delivered at The Cornwall

Independent School recognise that the wider community has much to offer and aim to work in partnership with health professionals, Brook Advisory and other professionals or services as deemed appropriate.

### **Relationship and Sex Education at The Cornwall Independent School has three main elements:**

#### **Attitudes and Values**

- learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices
- learning the value of family life, stable and loving relationships and marriage
- learning about the nurture of children
- learning the value of respect, love and care
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- developing critical thinking as part of decision-making
- challenging myths, misconceptions and false assumptions about normal behaviour

#### **Personal and Social Skills**

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- developing self-respect and empathy for others
- learning to make choices with an absence of prejudice
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- managing conflict

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

- learning and understanding, at appropriate stages, physical development
- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay

**Aims and Objectives:** The aim of RSE is to provide balanced factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our RSE programme delivered in a number of ways, aims to prepare students for an adult life in which they can:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour;
- have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others
- have respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly regarding sexual and pastoral relationships
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected relationships
- communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues
- develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality
- challenge sexism and prejudice and promote equality and diversity
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity
- understand the reasons for having protected sex
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from uninvited/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV
- be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
- know how the law applies to sexual relationships

**Content:** Teaching materials used reflect ongoing consultation with parents and professional advisers and is regularly reviewed to ensure it is age-appropriate, of high-quality and contextually appropriate to our pupils. Age and cultural backgrounds of the students are always regarded in relation to resources that are used. We ensure that our RSE curriculum is well-planned, with many opportunities for questions and discussions whilst also including effective assessment to monitor understanding.

**Organisation:** Within the primary school, the majority of content will be taught by pupils' class teacher. Within the secondary school, Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education will be taught across a number of subjects and staff, including pupils' form tutors, Science staff and our PSHE and Citizenship staff, in addition to specific workshops delivered annually by Brook

Advisory. We look for opportunities to integrate teaching where appropriate from across wider curriculum subjects such as citizenship, RE, science, computing and PE so as to promote a whole school approach to wellbeing and health. Appropriate and suitably experienced and/or knowledgeable visitors from outside of our school may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSE in The Cornwall Independent School.

**Delivery – linking to wider curriculum subjects:** We ensure staff feel confident and informed in the delivery of our RSE curriculum, through our staff training and high-quality planning and resources. Students learn at the appropriate level how good relationships can promote mental well-being, how to manage their feelings positively and how to manage changing relationships. Starting with our youngest of pupils, even within our EYFS, we recognise the importance of teaching our pupils how to be tolerant and respectful to all, regardless of the Protected Characteristics such as gender or race to help ingrain these values as early as possible. We emphasise the importance on our older students as role-models for our younger pupils with regard to their own role in relaying the correct information around RSE. We recognise that it is often peers and older students who pupils will discuss RSE matters with and so we promote our students being factual and responsible with the information that they hold.

The school aims to teach in a way which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of the children at the School and prepares them for the changes of puberty and adult life. The RSE programme, outside the Science Schemes of Work where certain topics are dealt with, is conducted using a variety of informal activities which have been built into the programme. Lessons will require pupils to respond in a variety of ways, depending on the content and age-group being taught. Topics which pupils may find particularly difficult to discuss, such as consent, will be given ample time to ensure open discussions can take place.

A set of ground rules, co-created with students, help teachers create a safe environment, in which both they and students are able to confidently and discuss the content being taught. The following are example rules for RSE lessons:

- students must be made aware that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- no one (teacher or student) will have to answer a personal question;
- no one will be forced to take part in a discussion;
- meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way;
- when answering a specific question which involves information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time;
- that any teasing on sexual matters will not be tolerated and will be treated as harassment or bullying. Children are being trusted to use the information gained in lessons in a responsible and mature way and
- where a member of staff is concerned that a child protection issue is arising, it is his/her responsibility to follow the school's Safeguarding policy.

Whilst we aim to create a safe and open environment during these sessions, the school recognises that many pupils will feel it difficult to ask questions or share their thoughts. We actively work with our pupils to develop strategies to remove these barriers, including asking students who and how they'd like to share questions and thoughts.

**Procedures for Relationships and Sex Education:** A coherent programme of RSE has been developed which focuses on the core areas detail above. The Pastoral Deputy Head organises the key elements in lessons liaising with specialist agencies including health professional where appropriate. Facts are presented, and issues considered within a clear moral framework, allowing students to recognise the importance of dignity and respect for themselves and others, the values of family life and acceptance of responsibility.

Within the context described above, such topics as contraception, abortion, homosexuality and HIV/AIDS are discussed since avoiding sensitive or controversial issues can leave students and young people confused and at risk. A range of methodologies and resources are used, regularly reviewed and updated to ensure accuracy of information and relevancy. Issues of a particularly sensitive nature require explicit delivery. They are presented in a broad and balanced way, free from sensationalism and personal bias and sensitively geared to the level of students, needs and experience.

Within any particular group there is an emphasis on trust, respect for privacy, care and compassion and the necessity of listening to others opinions in a respectful, reflective manner. Sensitivity to religious beliefs is regarded as an important dimension. The School seeks to develop students' self-esteem and a sense of responsibility by counteracting prejudice and victimisation. Key elements of RSE, or those which are especially sensitive, may be delivered by specialists. However, the School will ensure that:

- teachers are aware of their legal responsibilities;
- the concerns of teachers never trespass on parental rights;
- students are taught how to gain information on a wide range of health-related issues to include information on the provision of specific and individual advice;
- should a teacher believe that a student to be in danger or distressed or should questions from students cause such concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be consulted so that the best course of action can be identified;

It is important that all staff and outside visitors taking part in this programme are aware of these ground rules and that a classroom is not the same as a counselling session or clinic. In any one class, there are children from different backgrounds, at varying levels of physical and emotional maturity. Teachers need to be sensitive to the needs of all their children and work in a way which protects their sensibilities. Our programme for Relationship and Sex Education is broken down into the following programmes of study:

#### Relationships Education (EYFS, KS1, KS2)

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| <p><b>Families and people who care for me</b></p> | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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 for them.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• that marriage/civil partnership represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.</li> <li>• how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Caring friendships</b></p>                  | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.</li> <li>• the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties.</li> <li>• that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Respectful relationships</b></p>            | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>  |

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|                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the conventions of courtesy and manners.</li> <li>the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive.</li> <li>the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Online relationships</b> | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them.</li> <li>how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met.</li> <li>how information and data is shared and used online.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Being safe</b>           | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context).</li> <li>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.</li> <li>that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact.</li> <li>how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know.</li> <li>How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult.</li> <li>how to ask for advice or help for self and for others, and to keep trying until they are heard, including having the vocabulary and confidence to report concerns or abuse.</li> <li>where to get advice from e.g. family, school and/or other sources.</li> </ul> |

### **National Curriculum for Science (KS1 and KS2)**

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| <b>The Human Body and Reproduction</b> | At key stages 1 and 2 this includes teaching about the main external body parts and changes to the human body as it grows from birth to old age, including puberty. There is no right to withdraw from the national curriculum. |
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### **Relationships and Sex Education (KS2)**

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| <b>Sex Education</b> | <p>The content of our Sex Education Curriculum in KS2 considers pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development and maturity of our pupils. It is reviewed and adapted in consultation with parents. It is age-appropriate and takes into account the developmental differences of the children, considering religious background and the significance of other factors such as any special educational needs or disabilities.</p> <p>The content includes ensuring that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and – drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science.</p> |
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### **Health Education (KS1 and KS2)**

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| <b>Mental wellbeing</b> | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.</li> </ul> |
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|                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that there is a normal range of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations.</li> <li>• how to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others' feelings.</li> <li>• how to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate.</li> <li>• the benefits of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation, voluntary and service-based activity on mental wellbeing and happiness.</li> <li>• simple self-care techniques, including the impact of relaxation, time spent with friends and family and the benefits of hobbies and interests.</li> <li>• isolation and loneliness can affect children and that it is very important for children to discuss their feelings with an adult and seek support.</li> <li>• that bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing.</li> <li>• where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including whom in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online).</li> <li>• it is common for people to experience mental ill health. For many people who do, the problems can resolve if the right support is made available and accessed, especially if they access support as early as possible.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Internet safety and harms</b>   | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that for most people the internet is an integral part of life and has many benefits.</li> <li>• about the benefits of balancing time spent on and offline and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental wellbeing.</li> <li>• how to consider the effect of their online actions on others and know how to recognise and display respectful behaviour online and the importance of keeping personal information private.</li> <li>• why social media, some computer games and online gaming, for example, are age restricted.</li> <li>• that the internet can also be a negative place where online abuse, trolling, bullying and harassment can take place, which can have a negative impact on mental health.</li> <li>• how to be a discerning consumer of information online including understanding that information, including that from search engines, is ranked, selected and targeted.</li> <li>• where and how to report concerns and get support with issues online.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Physical health and fitness</b> | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the characteristics and mental and physical benefits of an active lifestyle.</li> <li>• the importance of building regular exercise into daily and weekly routines and how to achieve this, for example a daily active mile or other forms of regular, vigorous exercise.</li> <li>• the risks associated with an inactive lifestyle (including obesity).</li> <li>• how and when to seek support including which adults to speak to in school if they are worried about their health.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Healthy eating</b>              | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what constitutes a healthy diet (including understanding calories, and nutritional content).</li> <li>• the principles of planning and preparing a range of healthy meals.</li> <li>• the characteristics of a poor diet and risks associated with unhealthy eating (including, for example, obesity) and other behaviours (e.g. the impact of alcohol on diet or health).</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Drugs, alcohol and tobacco</b>  | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and associated risks, including smoking, alcohol use and drug-taking.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Health and prevention</b>       | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how to recognise early signs of physical illness, such as weight loss, or unexplained changes to the body.</li> <li>• about safe and unsafe exposure to the sun, and how to reduce the risk of sun damage,</li> </ul>  |

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|                                 | <p>including skin cancer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and that a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.</li> <li>about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including regular check-ups at the dentist.</li> <li>about personal hygiene and germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread and the importance of handwashing.</li> <li>The facts and science relating to allergies, immunisations and vaccination.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Basic first aid</b>          | <p>Pupils will be taught:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>know how to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services if necessary.</li> <li>concepts of basic first aid, for example dealing with common injuries, including head injuries.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Changing adolescent body</b> | <p>Pupils will be taught:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes.</li> <li>about menstrual wellbeing including the key facts about the menstrual cycle.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Menstruation</b>             | <p>The onset of menstruation can be confusing or even alarming for girls if they are not prepared. As with education about puberty, the programme will include understanding of and preparation for menstruation, for all pupils. The school will also make adequate and sensitive arrangements to help girls manage menstruation and with requests for sanitary protection. This content will continue into KS3/KS4.</p>   |

### **Relationships and Sex Education (K3, KS4)**

Effective RSE supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time. Knowledge about safer sex and sexual health remains important to ensure that young people are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. We will deliver this in a non-judgemental, factual way and allow scope for young people to ask questions in a safe environment. Staff may use approaches such as distancing techniques, setting ground rules with the class to help manage sensitive discussion and using question boxes to allow pupils to raise issues anonymously.

Pupils are taught about the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way. We aim for all pupils to feel that the content is relevant to them and their developing sexuality. Sexual orientation and gender identity will be explored at a timely point and in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner.

When teaching about these topics, it is recognised that young people may be discovering or understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity. Key aspects of the law relating to sex which should be taught include the age of consent, what consent is and is not, the definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment, and choices permitted by the law around pregnancy. Staff will also ensure there is an equal opportunity to explore the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships. This should be integrated appropriately into the RSE programme, rather than addressed separately or in only one lesson.

### **Sexual Exploitation and abuse (Including FGM):**

Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, are addressed sensitively and clearly. The school will also address the physical and emotional damage caused by female genital mutilation (FGM). Pupils will be taught where to find support and that it is a criminal offence to perform or assist in the performance of FGM or fail to protect a person for whom you are responsible from FGM.

As well as addressing this in the context of the law, pupils may also need support to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence, including honour-based violence and forced marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for oneself or others at risk. The school will also be mindful that for pupils who are or have experienced unhealthy or unsafe relationships at home or socially, the school may have a particularly important role in being a place of consistency and safety where they can easily speak to trusted adults, report problems and find support.

The school will continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary:

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| <b>Families</b> | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that there are different types of committed, stable relationships.</li> </ul> |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.</li> <li>• what marriage and civil partnerships are, including their legal status e.g. that marriage and civil partnerships carry legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.</li> <li>• why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.</li> <li>• the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.</li> <li>• the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to the raising of children.</li> <li>• how to: determine whether peers, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationships is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Respectful relationships, including friendships</b> | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (both on and offline) including: trust, respect, honesty, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship.</li> <li>• What is an unhealthy relationship, and the lasting negative impact on mental wellbeing.</li> <li>• practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.</li> <li>• 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).</li> <li>• 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 tolerance and respect to others and others' beliefs, including people in positions of authority.</li> <li>• about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.</li> <li>• that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.</li> <li>• what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Online and media</b>                                | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply online and offline.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them.</li> <li>• what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.</li> <li>• the impact of viewing harmful content.</li> <li>• that specifically sexually explicit material often 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.</li> <li>• that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is against the law.</li> <li>• how data is generated, collected, shared and used online, for example, how personal data is captured on social media or understanding the way that businesses may exploit the data available to them.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Being safe</b>                                      | <p>Pupils will be taught</p>   |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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).</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health</b> | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause.</li> <li>• that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.</li> <li>• that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.</li> <li>• the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices and options available.</li> <li>• the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage.</li> <li>• 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).</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• how prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.</li> <li>• how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.</li> <li>• how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.</li> </ul> |

**National Curriculum for Science**

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|---------------------|--|
| <b>Reproduction</b> | <p>At Key Stage 3 and 4 this includes teaching about reproduction in humans, for example the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems, menstrual cycles, gametes, fertilisation, gestation, birth and HIV/AIDS. There continues to be no right of withdrawal from any part of the national curriculum.</p> |
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## Education (KS3 and KS4)

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|-----------------------------|---|
| Menstruation                | The onset of menstruation can be confusing or even alarming for girls if they are not prepared. As with education about puberty, the programme will include understanding of and preparation for menstruation, for all pupils. The school will also make adequate and sensitive arrangements to help girls manage menstruation and with requests for sanitary protection.   |
| Mental wellbeing            | Pupils will be taught <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.</li><li>• that happiness is linked to being connected to others.</li><li>• how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing issues.</li><li>• common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression).</li><li>• how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health.</li><li>• the benefits of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.</li></ul>   |
| Internet safety and harms   | Pupils will be taught <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online through setting unrealistic expectations for body image, how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships (including social media), the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online.</li><li>• how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or get support, if they have been affected by those behaviours</li></ul> |
| Physical health and fitness | Pupils will be taught <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress.</li><li>• the characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardiovascular ill-health.</li><li>• about the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.</li></ul>  |
| Healthy eating              | Pupils will be taught <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including eating disorders, tooth decay and cancer. <i>*Eating disorders and extreme weight loss are a specialised area and the school would access qualified support or advice as needed and will avoid addressing them without that support.</i></li></ul>   |

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|----------------------------|---|
| Drugs, alcohol and tobacco | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions.</li> <li>• the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.</li> <li>• the physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood.</li> <li>• the physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency.</li> <li>• awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks.</li> <li>• the facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.</li> </ul> |
| Health and prevention      | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• about personal hygiene, germs including bacteria (microbes), viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics.</li> <li>• about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist.</li> <li>• (late secondary) the benefits of regular self-examination (including screening and immunisation).</li> <li>• The facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination.</li> <li>• the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.</li> </ul>   |
| Basic first aid            | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• basic treatment for common injuries.</li> <li>• life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR (from Year 8 onwards).</li> <li>• the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed.</li> </ul>  |
| Changing adolescent body   | <p>Pupils will be taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual wellbeing.</li> <li>• the main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.</li> </ul>  |

#### The Law:

The Cornwall Independent School recognises the importance of pupils knowing what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions. We ensure pupils are made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- marriage; consent, including the age of consent; violence against women and girls;
- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including ‘sexting’, youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.); pornography; abortion; sexuality; gender identity; substance misuse;
- violence and exploitation by gangs; extremism/radicalisation; criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or ‘county lines’ drugs operations); hate crime and female genital mutilation (FGM)
- The school uses [guidance published by the DfE](#) to support in its work to discourage and prevent the sharing of nude and/or semi-nude images.

#### Working with external agencies:

Working with external organisations can enhance the delivery of these subjects, bringing specialist knowledge and different ways of delivering content to our pupils. As with any visitor, we will ensure they undergo safeguarding checks and carry out due diligence on them, ensuring their proposed teaching is in line with our planned programme of study and this policy. When in class, visitors will be supervised by a teacher, who will be present at all times. Their teaching must also be age-appropriate and accessible for the pupils to whom they intend to teach. We will request their materials and lesson plans in advance so that we can ensure it is appropriate for all of our pupils. The school will ensure that external agencies who visit understand their responsibilities regarding safeguarding of our pupils and know how to deal with both confidentiality within the school and also any safeguarding concerns including how to report these concerns. We recognise that visitors are an enhancement to support our staff rather than as a replacement.

### **Senior Leadership and whole school approach:**

To ensure effective practice across the school, we have established a curriculum lead for our Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education who is the PSHEE Co-ordinator.

Alongside this, our senior leadership team will ensure these subjects are set in the context of a wider whole-school approach to supporting pupils to be safe, happy and prepared for life beyond school. For example, our curriculum on relationships and on sex complement, and are supported by, the school's wider policies on behaviour, inclusion, respect for equality and diversity, bullying and safeguarding (including handling of any reports pupils may make as a result of the subject content). The subjects sit within the context of a school's broader ethos and approach to developing pupils socially, morally, spiritually and culturally, and its pastoral care system. This is also the case for our teaching about mental health within health education. The curriculum on health education similarly complements, and is supported by, the school's wider education on healthy lifestyles through physical education, food technology, science, sport, extra-curricular activity and school food.

The school will consider how its teaching can help support the development of important attributes in pupils, such as honesty, kindness, tolerance, courtesy, resilience and self-efficacy, as well as how those attributes are also developed by other aspects of the school's provision. The Deputy Pastoral Leader ensures that issues are proactively addressed in a timely way in line with current evidence on children's physical, emotional and sexual development, in line with pupil need, informed by pupil voice and participation in curriculum development.

### **Specific Issues within RSE**

#### **Child Protection, reporting and confidentiality:**

The Cornwall Independent School has a separate Safeguarding Child Protection Policy. Effective Relationship and Sex Education may bring about disclosures of child protection issues and staff are aware of the procedures for reporting their concerns by informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff ensure that children are made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report, and how any report will be handled. This includes if they have a concern about a friend or peer.

When teaching the new subjects, the school recognises that children may raise topics including self-harm and suicide. In talking about this content in the classroom, teachers will be aware of the risks of encouraging or making suicide seem a more viable option for pupils and avoid material being instructive rather than preventative. Staff will take care to avoid giving instructions or methods of self-harm or suicide and avoid using emotive language, videos or images.

**Controversial and Sensitive Issues:** Members of staff are aware that views around RSE related issues are varied. However, whilst personal views are respected, all RSE issues are taught without bias. Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that students are able to form their own informed opinions but also respect others that may have a different opinion.

**Dealing with difficult Questions:** We recognise that pupils (especially primary-aged) will often ask staff questions pertaining to sex or sexuality which go beyond what is set out for our Relationships Education. We recognise that children of the same age may be developmentally at different stages, leading to different types of questions or behaviours. As such, our teaching methods take account of these differences – including when they are due to specific special educational needs or disabilities – and consider the potential for discussion on a one-to-one basis or in smaller groups. Both formal and informal RSE arising from students' questions are answered according to the age and maturity of the student concerned, considering each question and as case-by-case basis. Staff do not have to answer questions directly and can be addressed individually later. Staff will consider with their students what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting and the school will offer support and training in answering questions which are better not dealt with in front of a whole class. Individual teachers must refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are concerned by a pupil's questions.

**Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT):** The Cornwall Independent School believes that Relationship and Sex Education should meet the needs of all students regardless of their developing sexuality and be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Teaching about LGBT will form part of our Relationships and Sex Education Programme of Study; the school will ensure that its teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate and delivered with reference to the law. Homophobic bullying is dealt with strongly yet sensitively.

**Equal Opportunities and inclusion (Including SEND) in Relationship and Sex Education:** The Relationship and Sex Education curriculum has been developed to take into account the diversity of the school's population and to meet the needs of the students. We are aware of our requirements to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and we review our teaching materials to ensure their suitability for our pupils. All Relationship and Sex Education will be inclusive and meet the needs of all young people, recognising that issues such as sexuality, disability, ethnicity and faith affect attitudes towards sex and relationships. We will address explicit and implicit homophobia in The Cornwall Independent School, and issues of related bullying.

At The Cornwall Independent School, we believe Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education must be accessible for all pupils. This is particularly important when planning teaching for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities as they represent a large minority of pupils. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised is our starting point to ensure accessibility. This school is also mindful of the preparing for adulthood outcomes, as set out in the SEND code of practice, when preparing these subjects for those with SEND. The Cornwall Independent School recognises that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education can also be a particular priority for some pupils, for example some with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities. Such factors will be taken into consideration in designing and teaching these subjects.

**Sexual Violence/Harassment and Gender stereotypes:** The Cornwall Independent School is alert to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and takes positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled. Staff have an important role to play in modelling positive behaviours and our School pastoral and behaviour policies aim to reinforce our values and support all pupils.

The school refers to as part of our Safeguarding – Child Protection Policy, the Department for Education's Advice on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children. We recognise the importance of making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up. Any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be taken seriously; staff are aware that statistically it is more likely that females will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment than males, and that it is more likely that it will be perpetrated by males. However, males can also be the victims of sexual violence, and it can also happen in same-sex relationships. However, we do not make assumptions about the behaviour of boys and young men and that they are not made to feel that this behaviour is an inevitable part of being male; we recognise that most young men are respectful of young women and each other. An understanding for all pupils of healthy relationships, acceptable behaviour and the right of everyone to equal treatment will help ensure that our pupils treat each other well and go on to be respectful and kind adults.

**Involvement of Parents/Carers:** We recognise the vital role parents play in the development of their children's understanding about relationships. As such, we encourage an active partnership with all parents in the development and the delivery of Relationships Education and RSE, so that parents can feel confident in the programme offered to their children. Parents are informed by letter prior to specific SRE sessions and are invited in to discuss the content with the teachers.

**Parental Rights – Right to be excused from sex education** – In line with statutory guidance, whilst parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from all or any part of Relationships Education or Health Education, parents can request to withdraw their children from any or all parts of the School's programme of sex education, other than those elements which are required by the National Curriculum. It is realised that, under exceptional circumstances, a very small number of parents may wish to exclude their children from this programme. If parents have requested that their child be withdrawn from an aspect of Sex Education, the Headteacher will meet with parents to discuss the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher (although the detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parent proposes to deliver sex education to their child at home instead).

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

At The Cornwall Independent School we believe that all children should be offered the opportunity of receiving an appropriate, comprehensive and well-planned programme of Relationships and Sex Education in accordance with the law and government policy. Relationships and Sex education is taught, in part, through Science lessons in accordance with the National Curriculum.

All children at The Cornwall Independent School have a basic entitlement to information about the human life cycle and reproduction, which is covered in the science curriculum. Parents do not have the right to withdraw children from this provision which forms the basis for understanding the nature of life itself.

Once a child has been withdrawn, they cannot take part in the Sex education programme until the request for withdrawal has been removed.

**Assessment:** The Cornwall Independent School maintains the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work in these subjects as for other curriculum areas. A strong curriculum will build on the knowledge pupils have previously acquired, including in other subjects, with regular feedback provided on pupil progress. Lessons are planned to ensure that pupils of differing abilities, including the most able, are suitably challenged. Pupil learning is assessed, and assessments used to identify where pupils need extra support or intervention. Whilst there is no formal assessment for these subjects in the sense of an examination, we use a range of methods, for example, written assignments / answering of scenario cards, discussions or self-evaluations, to capture progress.

**Monitoring and Evaluating the Impact of RSE:** The school will regularly monitor relationships, Health and Sex Education to ensure the curriculum is effective and meeting the needs of our pupils. This will be carried out by the SLT. Monitoring will involve:

- Reviewing pupils' learning within books and assessments
- Reviewing curriculum resources with parents and pupils
- Ensuring that vocabulary being used within lessons is appropriate to the current language being used by children e.g. 'sexting'
- Reviewing parent and pupil questionnaire responses to look for developments that can be made.

**Board of Governors:** As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the Board of Governors will also make sure 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; and,
- the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

**Confidentiality:** Teachers conduct Sex and Relationships Education lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. In these circumstances, the teacher will talk to the child as a matter of urgency. If the teacher has concerns, they will draw their concerns to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead. (See also our Child Protection Policy.)

#### **Legal Status:**

- Complies with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations currently in force.
- [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education \(England\) Regulations 2019 \(DfE: updated July 2025\)](#)
- [Sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 \(HM Gov: 2017\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE: 2025\)](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years \(DfE: January 2015\)](#)
- [Sexual Offences Act 2003 \(HM Government: 2003\)](#)