Charitable Objects of St. Catherine's School- *The Objects for which the Company is established are to promote and provide for the advancement of education by providing, conducting, governing, carrying on and maintaining in the United Kingdom, or elsewhere, a boarding or day School or Schools for girls in which the teaching shall be in accordance with the principles of the Church of England.*

ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL BRAMLEY

SENIOR SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

'Believe… Achieve… Succeed'

Policy Holder	Kirsty Meredith with Dr Emma Ross
Date draft sent to parents	September 2025, Open Forum November 2025
Date approved	December 2025
Approval	Pastoral and Wellbeing Committee
Date current policy revised and communicated to parents	4 September 2026
Date current policy finalised	9 Sept 2026
Date for next review	July 2027

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are statutory revisions.

The Policy

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) forms part of the statutory curriculum for all schools.

This policy has regard to the following statutory guidance and legislation:

- Department for Education (DfE), Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (September 2026);
- Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (September 2026);
- Education Act 1996;
- Education Act 2002;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;

- Statutory Safeguarding Guidance including *Working Together to Safeguard Children*;
- Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures; and
- any other statutory guidance applicable to the School.

The revised Department for Education Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) guidance is statutory guidance issued under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

St Catherine's School is committed to providing high-quality, age-appropriate Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education which enables every pupil to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes required to lead safe, healthy and respectful lives.

RSE forms part of the School's wider safeguarding, personal development, Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and pastoral provision. It is not delivered as a stand-alone programme of sex education but as part of a planned curriculum that develops progressively from early years, in the Prep School, through to post-16 education.

The School recognises that effective RSE is an important preventative safeguarding measure. It helps pupils understand healthy relationships, boundaries, consent, respect, equality, unacceptable behaviour, abuse and where to seek help.

This policy should be read alongside the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy, SEND and Inclusive Learning Policy, Equality Policy and Complaints Policy.

What Is Relationship and Sex Education?

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, of respect, love and care, and for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

Curriculum Content and Delivery

RSE is delivered through our Futures: Life curriculum. Futures: Life, is delivered as a Spiral Curriculum, re-visiting topics with age-appropriate content as the pupils go through the School. At 16+, the RSE curriculum is delivered through Futures: Sixth. Built around Government Guidelines as well as input from the Sixth Form, over the last four years the curriculum has included: STIs and sexual health, including information about getting tested for STIs, Spiking and keeping safe, Sexual assault, pornography, AI, and its link to misogynistic behaviour. Teaching will be factual, age-appropriate, evidence-informed and sensitive to the maturity of pupils. Teaching will present information in a balanced way and will not promote any particular political or ideological viewpoint.

Secondary pupils will progressively learn about:

- healthy and respectful relationships;
- friendship and intimate relationships;
- consent;
- boundaries;
- communication;
- power and control;

- relationship abuse;
- coercion and pressure;
- sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- violence against women and girls;
- contraception and pregnancy;
- sexually transmitted infections and sexual health;
- accessing healthcare and reliable information;
- sexual health misinformation;
- pornography and its potential impact on expectations and relationships;
- online sexual content;
- sharing intimate images;
- self-generated intimate images and/or videos;
- AI-generated sexualised images and deepfakes;
- online grooming and exploitation;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- misogyny and sexist attitudes;
- harmful online communities and influencers;
- positive role models;
- respectful understandings of masculinity and femininity;
- equality and dignity;
- laws relating to relevant areas of sexual behaviour and online activity; and
- sources of advice and support.

The curriculum is reviewed regularly so that teaching remains responsive to emerging risks and changes in technology.

The revised RSHE guidance specifically strengthens teaching around healthy relationships, harmful online influences, misogyny, pornography, AI and deepfakes.

The School will teach consent progressively and, in an age-appropriate manner.

Pupils will learn that:

- consent should be freely given;
- consent can be withdrawn;
- pressure, manipulation or coercion undermine genuine consent;
- people should respect another person's boundaries;
- silence or lack of resistance should not be interpreted as agreement;
- consent is relevant to relationships and personal boundaries;
- no person is entitled to another person's body, attention or sexual activity; and
- concerns about consent, pressure or abuse should be reported to a trusted adult.

Teaching will avoid victim-blaming and will reinforce that responsibility for harmful behaviour rests with the person choosing to behave harmfully.

Through tutor times and the Futures: Life lessons, RSE addresses the ways in which digital technology can influence pupils' understanding of relationships, bodies, sex and consent.

Teaching includes:

- the difference between real relationships and online portrayals;

- unrealistic or harmful expectations created by pornography;
- sexualised online content;
- algorithms and recommendation systems;
- online manipulation and grooming;
- pressure to send or receive intimate material;
- the risks associated with sharing personal information;
- self-generated intimate images and/or videos;
- AI-generated or manipulated images and videos, including deepfakes;
- how such material can cause harm;
- how to recognise misinformation;
- how and where to seek help; and
- the importance of reporting concerns rather than forwarding harmful material.

The School will never use explicit sexual material, pornography or exploitative content as teaching resources.

Where pupils disclose exposure to harmful sexual content, the School will respond through its safeguarding procedures.

The School actively promotes respectful relationships and challenge attitudes which demean, objectify or discriminate against others.

Pupils are supported to recognise:

- sexist stereotypes;
- misogynistic language;
- degrading attitudes towards women and girls;
- harmful stereotypes about men and boys;
- controlling and coercive behaviours;
- online communities that promote hostility towards women or relationships;
- the difference between healthy disagreement and abusive behaviour; and
- the importance of positive role models.

The School will challenge harmful behaviour without stereotyping or stigmatising pupils because of their sex. This is in line with the revised national approach which specifically identifies misogyny and harmful online influences as areas requiring stronger preventative education.

Inclusion and Equality

The School will provide RSE to all pupils, with appropriate adaptations to meet individual needs.

The curriculum is accessible to pupils with:

- SEND;
- additional communication needs;
- learning difficulties;
- English as an additional language;
- medical or sensory needs; or
- other circumstances requiring reasonable adjustment.

Resources are made available to pupils through OneNote. Teachers use appropriate differentiation, visuals, alternative communication methods, pre-teaching, repetition and other reasonable adjustments where necessary.

Different family structures, cultures and circumstances are treated respectfully.

Gender Questioning Pupils

The School will respond sensitively and on an individual basis to pupils who are questioning their gender.

Any response will prioritise:

- safeguarding;
- the child's wellbeing;
- the best interests of the child;
- the needs and rights of other pupils;
- parental involvement where appropriate and required;
- the School's legal duties; and
- advice from relevant professionals where appropriate.

The School will not adopt a blanket approach. Decisions about individual pupils will be made through the School's safeguarding and pastoral processes and in accordance with current statutory guidance and applicable law.

The School maintains a strong zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment or abuse of any pupil, including pupils who are questioning their gender.

Where decisions concern social transition, names, pronouns, uniform or other matters, the School will consider the circumstances carefully and in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and the School's safeguarding duties. Where requests involve social transition, a documented safeguarding assessment will be undertaken by the DSL and relevant pastoral staff, with parental involvement unless there is reason to believe such involvement would place the child at risk of harm.

KCSIE 2026 contains specific safeguarding considerations concerning children who are questioning their gender and directs Schools to consider such matters in the context of the child's best interests, safeguarding and relevant legal duties.

Teaching

RSE is taught through OneNote for distribution of resources. Those teaching the subject use a range of age-appropriate approaches, including:

- teacher explanation;
- structured discussion;
- scenario-based learning;
- anonymous questions;
- case studies;
- group and paired activities;
- reflection activities;
- video or other carefully selected resources;

- quizzes and retrieval activities; and
- signposting to trusted sources of information.
- Assessment through OneNote exercises
- Assessment through Menti meter / Teams forms / Google forms

Teachers establish clear ground rules before sensitive lessons.

Pupils are not required to disclose personal experiences or participate in activities that require personal disclosure.

Teachers will not ask pupils to share intimate personal information in front of classmates.

Managing Sensitive Questions

Pupils will be encouraged to ask questions.

Teachers will:

- answer questions in an age-appropriate and factual manner;
- distinguish between questions which can appropriately be answered in class and matters requiring individual support;
- correct misinformation;
- avoid unnecessary or inappropriate detail;
- use agreed school resources and curriculum materials;
- refer safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL) / Deputy Designated Safeguarding lead (DDSL) and;
- seek advice from the RSE Lead or DSL / DDSL where uncertain.

A teacher may defer answering a question if it is not appropriate for the age group or if answering it requires specialist or safeguarding input.

Resources and Quality Assurance:

At St Catherine's School, in line with the DfE guidance that schools carefully assess resources for age, maturity, sensitivity and where relevant, medical accuracy, we assess all external RSE resources before use to ensure that all resources are:

- age-appropriate;
- developmentally appropriate;
- accurate;
- consistent with statutory requirements;
- reflect safeguarding considerations;
- accessible to pupils with SEND;

And that they:

- avoid unnecessary explicitness;
- avoid discriminatory stereotypes; and

- support the School's curriculum aims.

Where appropriate, parents will be able to see information about the curriculum and examples of resources used.

Staff Training

Staff responsible for teaching RSE will receive appropriate training and support.

Training will include, as appropriate:

- the statutory RSHE curriculum;
- KCSIE 2026 safeguarding expectations;
- handling disclosures;
- child-on-child abuse;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- violence against women and girls;
- misogyny and harmful online attitudes;
- online safety;
- AI-generated content and deepfakes;
- SEND and inclusive teaching;
- managing sensitive questions;
- equality and discrimination; and
- referral and safeguarding procedures.

All staff must understand their safeguarding responsibilities and follow the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Confidentiality and Disclosures

RSE lessons are not confidential counselling sessions.

At the beginning of relevant lessons, teachers will remind pupils that:

"You can ask questions and talk about things that concern you, but if you tell a member of staff something that makes us think you or another child may not be safe, we may need to share that information with the safeguarding team so that appropriate help can be provided."

The school will respond to disclosures in accordance with KCSIE and its safeguarding procedures.

Parents and Carers

The School recognises parents and carers as important partners in children's education.

The School will:

- publish information about its RSE curriculum;
- explain the purpose and content of RSE;
- provide appropriate opportunities for parents and carers to understand the programme;
- signpost reliable sources of information;

- consider parental views when reviewing provision; and
- communicate changes to the curriculum where appropriate.

Parents and carers will be encouraged to discuss relationships, health, safety and online experiences with their children.

Right to Withdraw

St Catherine's School follows the statutory requirements concerning withdrawal from sex education.

Parents or carers may request that their child be withdrawn from some or all sex education delivered as part of RSE, subject to the statutory position.

Before granting a withdrawal request, the School will discuss the request with the parent or carer, explain the content and purpose of the curriculum, and consider whether the request is based on a misunderstanding of what will be taught.

Where a pupil is approaching the age of 16, the School will follow the statutory guidance concerning the pupil's wishes and the applicable withdrawal arrangements.

The School will record withdrawal requests and decisions.

Safeguarding and Child-on-Child Abuse

The School recognises RSE as a key component of preventative safeguarding.

Concerns may involve:

- sexual harassment;
- sexual violence;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- inappropriate sexualised language;
- coercive or controlling behaviour;
- relationship abuse;
- sharing or threatening to share intimate images;
- AI-generated intimate images;
- grooming;
- exploitation;
- misogynistic abuse;
- bullying; or
- other behaviour causing concern.

All concerns will be considered individually and proportionately.

The School will consider the context, developmental stage, SEND, additional vulnerabilities, power imbalance and potential for escalation.

The School will provide appropriate support to pupils affected by harmful behaviour and will also provide appropriate intervention and support for pupils who display harmful behaviour.

This is in line with KCSIE 2026, which places greater emphasis on understanding child-on-child abuse as preventable and on responding to harmful behaviour before it escalates.

RSE is delivered within the School's whole-school safeguarding framework.

Staff delivering the curriculum recognise that disclosures may arise during RSE lessons.

Any safeguarding concern arising from RSE will be dealt with in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and referred promptly to a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff will not investigate safeguarding disclosures themselves or attempt to determine whether an allegation is substantiated. They will listen calmly, avoid leading questions, record concerns accurately and pass them to the DSL in accordance with school procedures.

The School recognises that child-on-child abuse can occur in person or online and may include sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour, bullying, relationship abuse, coercive behaviour and misogynistic or degrading behaviour.

The School will not dismiss such behaviour as "banter", "just a joke" or "boys being boys". Concerns will be considered as safeguarding matters and responded to proportionately, taking account of the needs and safety of both the child who has experienced harm and the child who has displayed harmful behaviour.

This is in line with KCSIE 2026, which strengthens the focus on child-on-child abuse, including harassment and violence, misogyny and harmful sexual behaviour.

Spiral Curriculum

Stage	Key areas
U3-L4 (Years 7–8)	Healthy relationships, puberty, boundaries, consent, online safety, respectful behaviour and misinformation
U4-L5 (Years 9–10)	Intimate relationships, sexual health, contraception, consent, harassment, abuse, misogyny, online harms and AI/deepfakes
U5 (Year 11)	Healthy relationships, sexual health, consent, law, pornography, relationship abuse, online harms, help-seeking and preparation for adulthood
Sixth Form / post-16 (Years 12-13)	Healthy adult relationships, consent, sexual health, exploitation, online harms, wellbeing, misogyny including deep fakes, independence and accessing services

The precise sequence can be viewed in the Scheme of Work and remains flexible to take account of pupils' maturity, needs and local safeguarding context.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The RSE Lead will monitor implementation through:

- curriculum review;

- lesson observations where appropriate;
- pupil voice;
- staff feedback;
- parental feedback;
- assessment information;
- safeguarding data;
- behaviour and bullying data;
- attendance and engagement;
- review of reported incidents;
- review of resources; and
- consideration of emerging local and national safeguarding risks.

The DSL and RSE Lead will work together to identify whether safeguarding themes emerging from incidents or disclosures require curriculum adaptation.

Governance

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the School has an appropriate RSE policy and curriculum. Governors will review the policy annually and satisfy themselves that statutory requirements are met.

The Head is responsible for implementation.

The RSE Lead is responsible for curriculum development, staff support and monitoring.

The DSL is responsible for safeguarding responses arising from RSE and for ensuring that RSE supports the School's wider safeguarding strategy.

Teachers are responsible for delivering lessons in accordance with the curriculum and for reporting safeguarding concerns.

Complaints

Any complaint regarding RSE should be made in accordance with the School's Complaints Policy.

Safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL and will not be treated solely as curriculum complaints.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where:

- statutory guidance changes;
- safeguarding legislation changes;
- significant local safeguarding risks emerge;
- the School identifies a curriculum gap;
- monitoring identifies a need for amendment; or
- national guidance concerning RSE, safeguarding, online safety or emerging technologies is updated.

APPENDIX 1 – Key Safeguarding Principles for Staff

When delivering RSE, staff should remember:

1. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
2. It could happen here.
3. Do not promise confidentiality.
4. Do not investigate disclosures yourself.
5. Record concerns accurately and promptly.
6. Refer safeguarding concerns to the DSL.
7. Do not dismiss sexualised or misogynistic behaviour as "banter".
8. Consider both the child experiencing harm and the child displaying harmful behaviour.
9. Consider SEND, vulnerability, protected characteristics and context.
10. Do not require pupils to disclose personal experiences.
11. Use only approved, age-appropriate resources.
12. Challenge misinformation and harmful stereotypes.
13. Ensure pupils know how to seek help.
14. Follow the school's safeguarding procedures at all times.

APPENDIX 2 – Key Documents

The School will maintain access to the current versions of:

- DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance;
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE);
- Working Together to Safeguard Children;
- Local safeguarding partnership procedures;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Equality Policy;
- SEND and Inclusive Learning Policy; and
- Complaints Policy.