

Cherwell College Oxford

Department for Education (DfE) registration: 931/6016; DfE Social care unique reference number: SC473682

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy 2025-26

Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Statutory Requirements

This school policy is in line with current regulations from the Department of Education's statutory guidance on Relationships and Sex Education, updated September 2021.

Cherwell College Oxford delivers RSE with regards to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance (2025) and the Equality Act 2010 requiring observance of protected characteristics of age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership and sexual orientation. At Cherwell College Oxford we believe that all people should have access to RSE that is relevant to their particular needs. To achieve this, we will:

- be mindful of preparing for adult outcomes as set out in the SEND Code of Practice, 2014
- be proactive in combating sexism, misogyny, sexualised behaviour and sexist bullying
- foster healthy peer-to-peer communication and behaviour between boys and girls
- promote respect for, and understanding of, the views of different ethnic and cultural and religious groups in line the school's duty to keep students safe
- integrate LGBTQ+ content into the RSE programme rather than a standalone lesson or unit
- actively tackle homophobic bullying

Policy Development

It is a statutory requirement that parents are consulted when reviewing and revising the RSE policy; in addition, gathering the views of students and staff is recommended. The consultation and policy development process involves the following steps:

1. **Review** – a member of staff or working group will collate all relevant information including national and local guidance
2. **Staff consultation** – all school staff will be given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. **Parent consultation** – parents will be invited to provide feedback
4. **Student consultation** – through the student assembly, students will have the opportunity to comment on what they want from their RSE
5. **Ratification** – once amendments are made, the policy will be shared with SMT and ratified

Curriculum and Delivery of RSE

The DfE identifies 5 core elements of a relationship and sex education curriculum (see **APPENDIX 1**):

- Families

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- Respectful relationships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships

These elements are revisited and explored in greater depth as the students mature through the school. Care is taken to ensure that the content of the curriculum is age appropriate and accessible for Cherwell College Oxford students.

RSE is taught principally through the PSHE curriculum, based on three broad themes:

- Relationships (families, respectful relationships)
- Health and well-being (online and media – digital well-being; intimate and sexual relationships)
- Living in the wider world (Being safe; respectful relationships)

In addition, RSE is integrated into subject areas. For instance, biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum. The PSHE resources selected for our students are drawn from a number of ASDAN courses, including the Life Skills Challenge course, the Key Steps course and the PSHE Short Course. Furthermore, additional resources collated and endorsed by the PSHE Association are included in the curriculum offer.

The pastoral team at Cherwell College Oxford are central to ensuring a supportive framework is in place so that students can participate in sensitive discussions. Sources of support and guidance are signposted. Students also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by qualified professionals. Selected resources, materials and external agencies used to deliver the sex education programme operate within the context of the school's guidelines and the RSE Policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal

The Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

The DSL

The DSL is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from non-statutory/non-science components of RSE.

SENCo & Support Staff

The SENCo is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from components of RSE.

All staff are responsible for:

- delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- monitoring progress
- responding to the needs of individual students

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Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Principal.

Students

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

Parents' Right to Withdraw

We recognise the essential role of parents and carers in the development of a child's understanding about relationships and sex. We work in active partnership with parents/carers in the development and review of the RSE.

Parents have the right to request that the Principal withdraw their child from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE, up to and until 3 terms before their child turns 16. They do not have a right to withdraw their children from those aspects of RSE that are taught in national curriculum science. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in **APPENDIX 2** of this policy and addressed to the Principal. The Principal will discuss the request with parents with the aim of reaching an agreement regarding appropriate action that is in the child's best interests.

Staff Training

All new staff will receive a copy of the RSE policy. Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE through our continuing professional development programme. Health professionals may be asked to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

Monitoring Arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the SMT and the SENCo through:

- learning walks
- peer observations
- planning reviews
- student assembly meetings
- staff meetings

Students' development in RSE is monitored by Personal Tutors and the SENCo as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by the Principal and the DSL on an annual basis. At every review, and following consultation with parents, the policy will be approved by the governing board.

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APPENDIX 1 DfE Statutory Guidance, updated September 2021

The core elements of a Relationships and Sex Education curriculum

By the end of secondary school (Year 11)

Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition, cover the following content by the end of secondary school.

Families

Students should know:

- That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- What marriage is, including their legal status – for example, that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.
- Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.
- The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.
- The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
- How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships), how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.

Respectful relationships, including friendships

Students should know:

- The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships, in all contexts including online, such as:
- Trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict
- Reconciliation and ending relationships, this includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship
- Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (for example, how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)
- That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs

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- About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help
- That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable
- The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.

Online and media

Students should know:

- Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online
- Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them
- What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- The impact of viewing harmful content
- That specifically sexually explicit material, for example pornography, presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners
- That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail
- How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online

Being safe

Students should know:

- The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships
- How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn, in all contexts, including online.

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Students should know:

- 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

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- That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing
- The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause
- That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others
- That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex
- The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available
- The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage
- That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help)
- How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing
- About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment
- How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour
- How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

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APPENDIX 2 Parent Form: **Withdrawal from Relationships and Sex Education**

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT

Name of Child:

Year Group:

Name of Parent(s):

Date:

Please provide reasons for requesting that the Principal withdraw your child from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE.

Parent signature:

TO BE COMPLETED BY SCHOOL

Meeting date:	Present:
Agreed actions:	

Parent signature:

Principal's signature:

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APPENDIX 3: RSE AND PHSE – KEY COMPONENTS

Year 10

Self-awareness

Personal development

Money management

Respectful relationships

Consent

Coercion

Harassment

Human rights issues

Moral obligations

Environmental protection

Energy recovery facilities

Green economy

Personal responsibility

Sexually transmitted infections

Mental health awareness

Miscarriage

Social media pressure

Abortion

Contraception

Responding in emergencies

Raising the alarm

Neighbourly behaviour

Benefits of being a donor

Multicultural landscape in Britain

Diversity

Democracy

Dictatorship

Sexual diversity

Pornography

Respectful relationships

Nutritional value

Eating for physical and mental wellbeing

Philanthropic businesses

Volunteering

Psychological impact of helping others

Year 11

Financial planning at different life stages

Income/savings streams

Attitudes to risk

Monitoring expenditure

Aid projects at home and abroad

Personal hygiene into adulthood

Risky behaviour

Sexual health

Technology for a greener world

Think locally act globally

Energy recovery technology

Preventative action

Tools to safeguard mental health

Home/workplace safety

Health advisory services

Oxfordshire Sexual Health Services

Global human rights

Legal protection in the UK

Criminal justice system

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Cyber-crimes and scams

Cosmetic surgery

London stock exchange

House of Commons

FTSE 100

House of Lords

Consumer spending

Local/District Councils

Consumer watchdogs

Religious/cultural beliefs around marriage

Medical emergencies

Best diets for longevity

Addiction support

Role models and influencers

Self-image

Concept of giving back to society

Controversial

Importance of having goals

Post-16 education

Social skills

Effective communication

Friendship

Social stereotypes

Physical Health and Wellbeing

Body image and self-esteem

Positive and healthy friendships

Online and media safety

Mental Wellbeing

Sexual relationships

Consent notion

Sexual health

Contraception

Pregnancy

Miscarriage

Drugs, alcohol, and tobacco

Addiction and its consequences

Homophobia and Racism

Equality vs Equity

Respectful Relationships

Sexual harassment

Sexual violence

Internet safety and harms

Career Exploration

Financial Literacy

Reflection and Goal Setting

Citizenship and Global Awareness

Bullying and Discrimination

Leadership and Volunteering

Team Building

Reviewed: September 2025

Next Review: September 2026