



**PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH &
ECONOMIC EDUCATION (PSHE)
AND
RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION
(RSE)**

Reviewed by: S Roberts	Date: Sept 2026	Next review: Sept 2027
Approved by:	Date:	

Introduction:

This policy sets out Adcote School's approach to Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and Relationships Education (RE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). The policy is written by the PSHE Coordinator, Miss Sally Roberts, and is subsequently approved by the Headteacher, Mrs Nicola Tribe. It will be reviewed at least annually and will be updated in accordance with statutory guidance, legislation, safeguarding requirements or the needs of the school community. Parents will be consulted as part of the development and review of this policy. Students and staff will also be consulted to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant, responsive and appropriate.

PSHE is a core part of the school's curriculum and contributes to students' personal development, wellbeing, safeguarding and preparation for adult life. Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education form an integral part of the PSHE programme.

The policy has been developed with regard to the Department of Education's [Relationship Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education](#), revised in July 2025 and in force from 1st September 2026. The policy also takes account of the [The Education \(Independent Schools Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), the [Department for Education's Independent School Standards Guidance](#) (April 2026), the [Equality Act 2010](#), [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026](#) and the [SEND Code of Practice](#).

Legislation:

As an Independent School, Adcote School is required to provide PSHE which reflects the school's aims, ethos and values and encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

The Independent School Standards require the school to provide:

- personal, social, health and economic education;
- education which takes account of the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils;
- education which does not undermine fundamental British values;
- effective preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

The Independent School Standards also require independent schools to provide Relationships Education to students receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education to students receiving secondary education, with the statutory parental withdrawal provisions applying to the sex education element of RSE.

The school must have regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education. The statutory requirements for Relationships Education and RSE apply to students receiving primary and secondary education respectively. Health Education is not a separate statutory requirement for independent schools in the same way as it is for state-funded schools; however, health education forms a substantial and important part of Adcote School's PSHE provision and is required through the Independent School Standards.

The statutory requirements do not extend to the Sixth Form. Nevertheless, Adcote School provides an age-appropriate programme of PSHE and RSE for Years 12 and 13 to prepare pupils for independent adult life, higher education, employment and healthy relationships.

Section 42A of the Education Act 1997 requires governing bodies to ensure that all registered students at the school are provided with independent careers guidance from Year 8 (12-13 year olds) to Year 13 (17-18 year olds). The Independent School Standards (2019) requires that students receiving secondary education should have access to up-to-date careers guidance that:

- is presented in an impartial manner;
- enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options;
- helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.

At Adcote, Careers Education is embedded in the PSHE curriculum and this is detailed in the Careers Education Policy.

Policy Availability:

This policy will be published on the school website and will be available to anyone who requests a copy. Parents will also be provided with information about the content and sequencing of the PSHE/RSE curriculum. Parents will also be able to view curriculum materials and resources used in lessons upon request and subject to copyright requirements.

Rationale:

At Adcote School we believe that Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) are essential to students' personal development, wellbeing, safeguarding and preparation for adult life. High quality PSHE & RSE enables students to develop the knowledge, skills and values to make informed and responsible decisions, helping them to lead confident, healthy and responsible lives as individuals and members of society.

The PSHE/RSE programme aims to support students to:

- develop self-respect, self-worth and confidence;
- understand and manage responsibly a wider range of relationships as they mature;
- communicate respectfully;
- Understand boundaries, consent and personal autonomy;
- recognise and respond to abuse, harassment, exploitation and unsafe situations;
- understand the risks and opportunities associated with online life;
- develop emotional resilience and strategies for managing difficulties;
- make informed decisions about physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health;
- understand relevant laws and their rights and responsibilities;
- respect difference and diversity;
- challenge prejudice, discrimination, sexism and misogyny;
- prepare for adult life, further education, employment and participation in society.

We recognise that today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and their lives both online and offline present many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. Students need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way. Our PSHE/RSE programme is age and developmentally appropriate, carefully sequenced, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of students and parents, and is responsive to the needs of students and the wider school community.

Aims & Objectives:

PSHE/RSE Education supports the aims of the school and the broad and balanced curriculum aims to:

- promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life;
- contribute to the school's CLEAR learning programme which aims to develop the core skills of confidence, leadership, engagement, achievement and resilience so that students can thrive in the 21st century;
- develop students personal skills and attributes including empathy and compassion; respect for others; employability skills; enterprise skills and valuing and respecting diversity;
- develop students' ability to form and maintain healthy, respectful relationships;
- develop students' understanding of boundaries, consent, privacy and personal autonomy;
- enable students to recognise harmful, abusive or exploitative behaviour and know how to seek help;
- promote positive mental and physical health and wellbeing;
- prepare students' to navigate online environments safely and responsibly;
- develop students' ability to critically evaluate online information and media;
- promote respect for equality and diversity;
- challenge stereotypes, prejudice, sexism, misogyny, homophobia and other discriminatory behaviours;
- promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs;
- give students the knowledge, skills and understanding to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and become informed, active and responsible citizens in the community.

Entitlement & Equality of Opportunity:

All students are entitled to receive high-quality PSHE/RSE education. We strive to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all students irrespective of disability, special educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership or age, as applicable under the Equality Act 2010.

Students with special educational needs (SEND) follow the same PSHE/RSE education programme as all other students, but careful consideration is given concerning the level of differentiation needed and in some cases the content or delivery will be adapted. We are aware that some students may be more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their needs, and these factors are taken into consideration when teaching the PSHE/RSE programme. Students with English as an additional language will be supported to ensure they can fully access the lessons.

We recognise that some students may be particularly vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, bullying, harassment or other harms and curriculum planning and pastoral support will take this into account. We aim to ensure that our PSHE/RSE education will be sensitive to the different needs of individual students and ensure that no student is discriminated against.

We take due regard and comply with the relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010 which ensures that students are not discriminated against because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation. These are collectively known as the protected characteristics. We are alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and our PSHE/RSE programme takes positive action to build a culture which ensures that these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled.

Students are encouraged to respect diversity. Staff are aware of the important role they have to play in modelling positive behaviours and will not let any differing personal beliefs and attitudes influence the factual and balanced teaching of PSHE/RSE. All prejudicial views and discrimination will be challenged and dealt with in line with the school's policies.

Curriculum Structure:

The PSHE/RSE programme is delivered in timetabled weekly 'CLEAR' lessons. Our PSHE curriculum is structured as a progressive, spiral programme of units and we use the PSHE Association's Programme of Study and Curriculum models to design our curriculum with termly Schemes of Work produced by the PSHE Coordinator. These act as a guidance as to what should be taught, but PSHE teachers should use their discretion as certain issues may arise which need to be addressed in lessons. Teachers of PSHE/RSE are asked to complete a 'Work Covered' document each term which supports the monitoring and reviewing of the curriculum.

The PSHE curriculum covers:

- statutory Relationships Education;
- statutory Relationships and Sex Education;
- health and wellbeing;
- economic wellbeing;
- careers;
- personal safety;
- citizenship and life beyond school.

Provision:

At Adcote School PSHE/RSE is delivered with a whole-school approach which includes:

- curriculum time: this takes the form of a weekly lesson for each year group. The programme is delivered as part of our CLEAR learning programme and identified as 'PSHE/CLEAR' on students timetables. Students have one lesson each week;
- other subjects/curriculum areas: other subjects can also contribute to PSHE and can be effective in reinforcing aspects of the PSHE/RSE programme. For example, health education can complement what is taught through PE by developing core knowledge and broader understanding that enables people to lead healthy, active lives;
- focus weeks throughout the year such as Restart a Heart Day, UK Parliament Week and Anti-Bullying Week;
- through activities and whole-school events: residential experiences, visits and whole-school days such as Challenge Days provide many opportunities for students to plan and work together, develop and maintain relationships under different circumstances, and discover new qualities and characteristics through volunteering and participating;
- pastoral provision;
- involvement in the wider life of the school and extra-curricular activities;
- assemblies and talks from visiting speakers.

The PSHE Coordinator will work with colleagues to ensure that curriculum content is reinforced across the wider curriculum and that unnecessary duplication is avoided.

Teaching Methods and Learning Approaches:

All teachers are encouraged to develop a repertoire of flexible, active learning methods. We aim to create a safe and supportive learning environment. We take into account the maturity, development, age and readiness of each group when delivering the PSHE curriculum. The Schemes of Work include suggested activities and methods.

Effective learning and teaching approaches include:

- discussion and debate;
- scenarios and case studies;
- role play and drama;
- problem solving;
- reflection;
- questioning;
- information gathering;
- group work;
- structured discussion;
- decision-making activities;
- anonymous questions.

Teachers will establish a safe and supportive classroom environment and will use ground rules and distancing techniques where appropriate. We also encourage students to take part in a range of activities which promote active citizenship such as charity fundraising activities and planning school assemblies.

Learning and Teaching:

Handling complex issues safely in the classroom: PSHE/RSE education includes the teaching of complex, controversial and sensitive issues and teachers must be aware of how topics have the potential to be sensitive for students. In addition to the PSHE/RSE curriculum, there may be issues arising from the news or media which may capture students' attention or cause them concern which they may wish to discuss. We feel that it is vital that our students are able to have these discussions and the PSHE/RSE curriculum is important in developing students' knowledge, skills and confidence in complex and sensitive issues.

Teachers will:

- establish appropriate ground rules;
- use age-appropriate language and resources;
- avoid unnecessary personal disclosure;
- use distancing techniques where appropriate;
- provide balanced and factual information;
- avoid expressing personal views as facts;
- challenge discriminatory or harmful behaviour;
- respond sensitively to pupils who may have direct experience of a topic;
- follow safeguarding procedures where concerns arise.

Students will not be required to disclose personal experiences or answer personal questions.

Establishing a safe and supportive learning environment: it is important for teachers to establish a safe and supportive learning environment as this helps students to share feelings, explore values and attitudes, express opinions and consider those of others, without attracting negative feedback. It helps to develop students' confidence to ask questions, challenge information, draw on their own personal experience and express their own views and opinions. A safe and supportive learning environment is established by:

- Establishing ground rules at the start of lesson on expectations of how students will behave towards each other during discussions.
- Provide opportunities for students to discuss in small groups as well as whole class discussions.
- Make boxes available in which students can place anonymous questions or concerns.
- Provide access to balanced information and differing views to help students clarify their own opinion, (whilst making clear that behaviours such as racism, homophobia, bi-phobia, transphobia, discrimination and bullying are never acceptable in any form.
- Teachers are in an influential position to students and should therefore be cautious about expressing their own views.
- Be sensitive to the needs of all students and be aware that some students may have direct experience of particular issues.
- Always work within the school's policies on safeguarding and confidentiality and ensure students understand policies on disclosure of confidential information.
- Make students aware of reliable sources of support both inside and outside the classroom.

Confidentiality and handling disclosures: due to the nature of PSHE/RSE education, learning may result in students seeking advice or support on a specific personal issue. Teachers are aware that they cannot promise absolute confidentiality to students and if a student makes a disclosure, procedures set out in the school's Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy should be followed and the disclosure must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

Ground rules and distancing techniques: ground rules help to minimise inappropriate and unintended disclosures and comments of a negative nature made towards other students. They also help in effectively managing discussions which may lead to strong opinions. At the start of the academic year in their first PSHE/CLEAR lesson, students and teachers develop ground rules together which students are then frequently reminded about.

Examples of ground rules include:

- No one (teacher or student) should be expected to answer a personal question.
- No one will be forced to take part in a discussion.
- We will not make assumptions about people's values, attitudes, behaviours, identity, life experiences or feelings. We will listen to the other person's point of view respectfully and expect to be listened to ourselves.

In lessons, distancing techniques such as stories, scenarios, clips from TV programmes are used. The fictional characters and storylines stimulate discussions whilst 'de-personalising' discussions, allowing students to engage more objectively with the lesson content.

Managing difficult questions: It is important that students feel able to ask any questions that they wish and that their questions are valued. Sometimes an individual student will ask an explicit or difficult question in the classroom. Questions do not have to be answered directly and can be addressed later. We believe that individual teachers must use their skill and discretion in these situations and refer to the PSHE Coordinator if they have any concerns. Teachers may at times use an anonymous questions box for students to ask questions. In dealing with questions teachers should:

- Establish clear parameters about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting.

- Thank them for the question and check you have understood what they are asking and what they think the answer is
- Give a factual, age-appropriate answer when you can.
- Buy time if necessary: explain you do not know the answer/are not sure how best to answer and that you will find out more and respond later.
- Set the tone by speaking in a matter-of-fact way and ensuring that students discuss issues in a way which does not encourage giggling and silliness.
- Encourage students to write down questions anonymously and post them in a question box. The teacher then has time to prepare answers to all questions before the next session, and will choose not to respond to any questions which are inappropriate.
- If a verbal question is too personal the teacher should remind the student of the ground rules.
- Teachers should not be drawn into providing more information than is appropriate to the age of the child.
- Any safeguarding concerns should be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with school policy.

Teaching Responsibility and Staff Training:

Members of staff responsible for delivering the PSHE programme are provided with guidance documents and resources to support them in the delivery of the subject. Teachers are further aided through CPD courses and external providers may be called on to support the delivery of some topics. The PSHE Coordinator will keep teachers up-to-date with any changes in the curriculum in line with statutory guidelines and legislation.

Safeguarding:

PSHE/RSE forms part of the school's wider safeguarding strategy. Due to the nature of the subject, teachers are aware that sometimes disclosures may be made during PSHE/CLEAR sessions. All teaching staff are aware that if a student makes a disclosure then procedures set out in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy should be followed. If a member of staff has any concerns about a student, these should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Resources:

To support teaching staff in the delivery of the PSHE/RSE programme, a wide range of resources and materials are provided. Links to suggested resources are included in the Schemes of Work and made available to teaching staff on the shared Google Drive. These resources are regularly reviewed and updated by the PSHE Coordinator. The shared Google Drive also allows teachers to share resources with each other and guidance documents are also provided here. We used quality assured resources from the PSHE Association. Parents may request access to curriculum materials used in RSHE.

Student Voice:

We see the views of students as extremely important in the shaping of our PSHE/RSE Programme to ensure that it meets their needs and priorities. Students are given the opportunities to provide regular feedback on their PSHE/RSE education through the use of questionnaires. The results from these are then collated and reviewed by the PSHE Coordinator and are used to inform curriculum reform and development.

Working with external agencies:

External contributors from the community such as health promotion specialists, community police and fire officers, can make a valuable contribution to enhancing the PSHE/RSE curriculum and may be used at times to enrich students' learning. Where they are used, teachers must always be present during these sessions and remain responsible for the delivery of the PSHE/RSE curriculum. All visitors will be checked in line with the Visitor Policy.

Before an external provider delivers a session, the school will:

- check the provider's credentials;
- obtain resources to be used in advance;
- check that content is accurate;
- check that content is age and stage appropriate;
- check that materials are accessible;
- check that content is unbiased and consistent with the school's curriculum and policies;
- establish safeguarding arrangements;
- ensure that the school retains responsibility for the content and delivery.

Assessment and reporting:

Assessment in PSHE/RSE focuses on students being given opportunities to reflect on their learning and identify the progress they have made in their understanding and confidence in topics. It is beneficial in increasing students' motivation and improving learning as it increases their awareness of their own progress and this helps to illustrate the value of their learning. It is further useful as a way of teachers feeling confident that learning has taken place and to identify future learning needs. Baseline assessments are used to identify students current level of understanding and opportunities are then given during lessons for students to demonstrate the progress of their learning. Assessment of learning then takes place at the end of the lesson/topic to measure the progress from the baseline assessment. This can be done in various forms and further guidance and examples are provided in the document 'Guidance on Assessing, Monitoring and Reporting on PSHE/RSE'.

Although students are not formally assessed in the subject, assessment is important in identifying students' progress and ongoing needs. Teachers assess students' knowledge and understanding, e.g. information on health and understanding of health and safety procedures through discussions and activities in lessons. Teachers can also assess students in how effectively they use the knowledge, understanding and skills they develop, e.g. through participating in discussions, group activities, resolving conflicts, making decisions and forming positive relationships. Teachers can also observe students' progress of these skills as students apply them in other areas of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

Students' engagement and progress is reported to parents in the half term and end of term reports. Students are graded 'Emerging' 'Secure' or 'Advanced' in the subject based on their knowledge and understanding of the topics covered in lessons and a teacher comment is given detailing students' engagement and effort in the subject. They will also receive an engagement (star rating) based on their level of engagement in lessons, i.e. contributions to class discussions, group work.

Involving parents and guardians:

We are committed to working with parents and guardians and recognise that they are the prime educators for children and we are committed to working with parents and guardians to build on what students learn at home. We work with parents and guardians by:

- making this PSHE/RSE policy available via the school's website;
- a letter is sent out at the start of each academic year with details of the PSHE programme and a copy of the curriculum is provided.;
- offer telephone calls/face-to-face meetings to answer any questions they have;
- identify sensitive RSE content in advance where appropriate;
- support parents in discussing RSHE topics with their children;
- communicate the fact that they have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of Sex Education delivered as part of statutory RSE.
- Parents online webinars and workshops;

Monitoring and evaluation:

The PSHE Coordinator will monitor the quality and effectiveness of the programme.

Monitoring will include:

- review of the curriculum;
- review of Schemes of Work;
- lesson observations and/or learning walks;
- review of Work Covered records;
- assessment information;
- student voice;
- staff feedback;
- parent feedback;
- review of resources;
- review of safeguarding themes and emerging local needs.

The curriculum will be audited annually against the statutory guidance. Particular attention will be paid to ensuring that all statutory content is covered by the end of the relevant phase and that there is clear progression between Years 3–6 and Years 7–11.

Role of the PSHE Coordinator:

The PSHE Coordinator will:

- ensure that the programme reflects statutory guidance and legislation;
- maintain the curriculum map and Schemes of Work;
- ensure progression across Years 3–13;
- coordinate staff training;
- provide guidance and resources to teachers;
- monitor implementation;
- review external providers;
- coordinate pupil voice;
- coordinate parent consultation;
- maintain evidence of curriculum review;
- ensure that the curriculum responds to emerging safeguarding and wellbeing issues;
- monitor the accessibility of the curriculum;

- liaise with the DSL, SENDCo, Careers Lead and other relevant staff;
- report to the Head/Proprietor on curriculum effectiveness;
- ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.

Other related policies and accompanying documentation:

All subject policies should indicate their contribution to PSHE in school. These are outlined in departmental handbooks. The following whole-school policies support PSHE education:

- Drug Education and Drug Related Incidents
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Equal Opportunities
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SEND Policy
- Online Safety
- Careers Education
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026
- PSHE whole school audits
- PSHE Curriculum
- PSHE Schemes of Work
- Work Covered Records
- Assessment Documentation
- Results from questionnaires
- Statutory Guidance - Department of Education's [Relationship Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education](#),

Relationships Education (RE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

As an independent school providing primary and secondary education, Adcote School provides Relationships Education (RE) in Years 3–6 and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in Years 7–11. These statutory requirements form part of the wider PSHE education programme and are taught through the school's timetabled PSHE/CLEAR curriculum. The statutory requirements do not apply to our Sixth Form, however as part of our PSHE/RSE curriculum, elements of Relationships and Sex Education are taught to these year groups as a way of fully preparing these students for adult life.

The Department for Education's statutory guidance, [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#), came into effect in its revised form on 1st September 2026 and applies to independent schools. The guidance should be read alongside the Independent School Standards, which require independent schools to have regard to the DfE guidance when making provision for these subjects.

The statutory RE and RSE requirements are embedded within Adcote's PSHE curriculum. The school's curriculum is organised as a progressive, spiral programme of age-appropriate units, informed by the PSHE Association's 2026 Programme of Study and Curriculum Models. Statutory RE and RSE and relevant health education content are therefore taught alongside other essential PSHE education, including personal safety, mental health and wellbeing, online safety, economic wellbeing, careers and preparation for adult life.

Definition of Relationships Education (RE)

Relationships Education focuses on the knowledge, understanding and skills students need to build and maintain positive, respectful and safe relationships. It includes relationships with family members, friends, peers and adults and supports students to understand kindness, respect, trust, boundaries, privacy, consent, communication and the characteristics of healthy relationships.

Relationships Education also helps students to recognise unhealthy or unsafe relationships, understand how to seek help and report concerns, and develop the knowledge and confidence needed to keep themselves and others safe both offline and online.

Definition of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) builds progressively on Relationships Education and prepares students for healthy, respectful and responsible relationships as they grow towards adulthood.

RSE includes the emotional, social, physical and ethical aspects of relationships and sexual health. It enables students to understand healthy intimate relationships, consent, boundaries, sexual health, contraception, pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and where to access reliable information and appropriate support.

RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. Rather, it provides students with accurate, age-appropriate and medically and factually accurate information, together with the knowledge and skills needed to make safe, responsible and informed decisions. It supports students to understand that healthy relationships involve kindness, care, mutual respect, honesty, trust, appropriate boundaries and awareness of power and equality.

Teaching also addresses risks and harms associated with relationships and sexual behaviour, including sexual harassment, sexual violence, abuse, exploitation, grooming, coercive control, harmful sexual behaviour, pornography and harmful online sexual content.

Relationships Education (Years 3 - 6):

In Years 3–6, Relationships Education provides the foundations for positive, healthy and safe relationships. It develops students' understanding of:

- families and people who care for them;
- caring friendships;
- respectful, kind relationships;
- online relationships and responsible online behaviour; and
- being safe and knowing how to seek help.

Students learn that families can take many different forms and that family circumstances may change. Teaching is inclusive and sensitive to pupils' individual circumstances, including families headed by grandparents, single-parent families, adoptive and foster families and families with same-sex parents.

Students develop an understanding of the qualities and behaviours associated with positive relationships, including kindness, respect, honesty, trust, loyalty, generosity, courage and resilience. They learn how to communicate appropriately, resolve disagreements, respect personal boundaries and recognise when relationships or behaviours are unhealthy or unsafe.

Relationships Education also includes online safety and responsible digital behaviour. Students are taught to recognise that relationships can exist both online and offline, to protect their privacy and personal information, to recognise inappropriate contact or content and to know how and to whom concerns should be reported.

Safeguarding is an integral part of Relationships Education. Students are taught age-appropriate knowledge about privacy, boundaries, body autonomy and the right to feel safe. They learn how to recognise inappropriate behaviour, including different forms of abuse, and how to seek help from trusted adults and appropriate services.

We recognise students may have different levels of prior knowledge and experience. Teaching is therefore age-appropriate, responsive to pupils' developmental needs and delivered within a safe and respectful classroom environment.

Link to the Science Curriculum:

Relationships Education complements, but does not replace, the statutory science curriculum.

In Year 5, students learn about puberty and changes to the human body through the Science curriculum. In Year 6, students learn about human reproduction as part of Science. Parents cannot withdraw pupils from these aspects of the Science curriculum.

The PSHE/RSE programme complements the Science curriculum by addressing the emotional, social, relational and wellbeing aspects of growing up, including managing change, seeking support, understanding personal boundaries and developing healthy attitudes towards relationships and puberty.

Relationships and Sex Education (Years 7 - 11):

In Years 7–11, RSE provides a progressive continuation of the knowledge and skills developed through Relationships Education. It prepares students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life and supports them to develop healthy, respectful and safe relationships.

The secondary RSE curriculum includes age-appropriate teaching about:

- families and different forms of committed and stable relationships;
- healthy and unhealthy relationships;
- friendships and intimate relationships;
- respect, kindness, trust, honesty, loyalty and communication;
- personal boundaries and privacy;
- consent, including the ability to give, withhold and withdraw consent;
- equality, power and respectful relationships;
- stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination and misogyny;
- sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- abuse, exploitation, grooming and harmful sexual behaviour;
- domestic abuse, coercive control and stalking;
- pornography and its potential impact on attitudes, expectations and relationships;
- online sexual harms, including sexual image sharing, exploitation and harmful or illegal content;
- AI-generated sexual content and deepfakes, where appropriate to pupils' age and understanding;
- the age of consent and the legal framework relating to sexual activity;
- contraception and the relative effectiveness of different methods;
- pregnancy, including choices and sources of support;
- sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and how transmission, prevention, testing and treatment are addressed;
- safer sex and the importance of seeking appropriate medical advice;
- the effects of alcohol and drugs on decision-making and sexual risk; and
- where pupils can access reliable information, medical advice and safeguarding support.

Teaching is factual, age-appropriate, inclusive and sensitive to students' developmental needs. It does not encourage sexual activity or normalise early sexual experimentation. Instead, it supports students to understand the importance of making informed choices, waiting until they are ready, respecting themselves and others, and recognising that healthy relationships require kindness, care, mutual respect and responsibility as well as consent.

Equality, diversity, biological sex and gender reassignment:

The RSE curriculum reflects the Equality Act 2010 and the requirement to promote respectful relationships and challenge prejudice, discrimination, bullying and harmful stereotypes. Students are taught factual information about biological sex and the legal protections relating to gender reassignment. Teaching does not present contested views as established fact. Students are encouraged to discuss sensitive issues respectfully, understand that people may hold different views and avoid stereotyping or discriminatory behaviour.

The school recognises that students may have different family circumstances, experiences and backgrounds. Teaching therefore promotes dignity, respect and inclusion and ensures that no student is subject to bullying, harassment or discrimination.

Online safety and sexual harms:

Online safety is integrated throughout the RSE curriculum rather than treated as a separate issue. Students are taught about the risks associated with social media, online relationships, sexualised content, pornography, sexual image sharing, exploitation, grooming, harassment and coercive or controlling behaviour.

At an age-appropriate stage, students learn that sharing, possessing or distributing indecent images of anyone under 18 can constitute a criminal offence, including where an image has been self-generated. They also learn about the risks associated with AI-generated sexual images and deepfakes and the importance of seeking help when they encounter harmful or illegal content.

The curriculum also addresses online misogyny, harmful stereotypes, influencers and other online content which may encourage hatred, harassment, exploitation, violence or unhealthy attitudes towards relationships.

Sixth Form:

The statutory requirements for Relationships Education and RSE described above apply to the primary and secondary phases. Adcote nevertheless provides age-appropriate PSHE/RSE provision in Years 12–13 as part of its wider preparation for adult life.

Sixth Form provision builds on learning from Years 7–11 and addresses the needs of young adults, including healthy and respectful relationships, sexual and reproductive health, consent, personal safety, mental health and wellbeing, financial independence, digital citizenship, employment and higher education, the law, healthy lifestyles and other issues relevant to independent adult life.

The Sixth Form curriculum is sufficiently flexible to respond to students' age, maturity, circumstances and emerging needs.

Right to Withdraw:

Parents have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from some or all sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.

There is **no right to withdraw** a student from:

- Relationships Education;
- Health Education;
- content taught as part of the Science curriculum, including teaching about puberty or human reproduction; or
- safeguarding education relating to keeping safe, abuse, exploitation, inappropriate behaviour or seeking help.

Primary pupils: Years 3–6:

Where Adcote provides sex education beyond the Science curriculum in Years 3–6, a parent may request that their child is withdrawn from that sex education. Such a request will be granted.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or from sex education taught as part of the Science curriculum.

Secondary pupils: Years 7–11:

Where a parent wishes to request withdrawal from sex education, the request should be made in writing to the Head. The Head will normally discuss the request with the parent and, where appropriate, the student, in order to understand the reasons for the request and clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. The discussion may include the educational and safeguarding benefits of receiving the education and the possible detrimental effects of withdrawal, including social and emotional impacts and the possibility that the student may subsequently receive inaccurate information from peers or online sources. The PSHE Coordinator may contribute to this discussion.

The school will respect a parent's request to withdraw a student from sex education unless the Head determines that there are exceptional circumstances in which the request should not be granted, for example because of safeguarding concerns or the student's specific vulnerability.

Parents may request withdrawal up to and until the point that the student is within three terms of turning 16. From three terms before a student turns 16, the individual student has the right to choose to receive sex education even where a parent has previously requested withdrawal. The school will ensure that students are aware of this right and will make appropriate arrangements where a student chooses to opt back in.

Arrangements following withdrawal:

Where a student is withdrawn from sex education, the school will provide appropriate and purposeful educational provision for the student during the relevant lessons.

The Curriculum Map identifies which elements of the curriculum constitute sex education for the purposes of withdrawal. Parents may request access to the curriculum information and relevant teaching materials in accordance with the school's arrangements for parental engagement and curriculum transparency.

