

PENCALENICK SCHOOL

PSHE, RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE/RSHE) POLICY

Policy owner	PSHE/RSHE Lead: Charlie Plumb
Linked senior leader	Deputy Headteacher / Jodie Watkins-Young
Approved by	Local Governing Body
Effective from	September 2026
Review cycle	At least annually, and sooner where statutory guidance changes
Next formal review	September 2027

This policy incorporates the school's wider PSHE entitlement and the statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education requirements in force from 1 September 2026.

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1. Policy statement and scope

Pencalenick School regards Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE), including statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE), as central to safeguarding, personal development, preparation for adulthood and pupils' ability to live safe, healthy, connected and increasingly independent lives.

This policy applies to all pupils receiving education within Pencalenick School's provision, including pupils receiving primary education in the two primary area resource bases (ARBs) and pupils receiving secondary education in Years 7–11. Primary pupils receive statutory Relationships Education and Health Education alongside wider PSHE. Secondary pupils receive statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education alongside wider PSHE. The wider offer is reinforced through lessons, assemblies, pupil voice, clubs, leadership, everyday routines and preparation for adulthood.

The curriculum is ambitious and inclusive. Adaptation is used to make learning accessible, not to remove pupils' entitlement to important knowledge. Teaching takes account of chronological age, prior knowledge, communication profile, cognition, emotional development, vulnerability and individual safeguarding needs.

2. Statutory and guidance framework

The school has regard to the Department for Education's revised statutory guidance, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, in force from 1 September 2026. The policy should be read alongside current safeguarding, equality, SEND and curriculum requirements.

- Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019.
- Education Act 1996 and Education Act 2002, including the statutory basis for RSE guidance.
- Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty and the protected characteristics.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, particularly preparation for adulthood.
- Online Safety Act 2023 and current statutory expectations relating to online safety, harmful content, image sharing, grooming, sextortion, AI-generated sexual imagery and deepfakes.
- DfE guidance on political impartiality in schools.
- National Curriculum requirements, including relevant science content.

Please note: the revised statutory guidance does not impose a blanket rule that all sexual or intimate content must wait until Year 9. Secondary schools must sequence statutory content appropriately, taking account of age, maturity, prior learning and safeguarding. Protective and preventative content can be taught earlier where appropriate.

3. Aims and curriculum intent

Our PSHE/RSHE curriculum aims to enable pupils to:

- develop healthy, safe and respectful relationships in family, friendship, community, work and intimate contexts;
- understand boundaries, bodily autonomy, consent, privacy, public and private behaviour, and how to seek help;
- recognise unhealthy, coercive, abusive, exploitative or discriminatory behaviour and know how to respond;
- develop accurate vocabulary for bodies, feelings, relationships, health and risk;
- understand physical and mental health, puberty, self-care, hygiene, sleep, nutrition, physical activity, substances and how to access health services;
- develop digital literacy and online safety, including critical thinking about misinformation, pornography, harmful content, scams, gaming, social media, AI-generated content and deepfakes;
- develop economic understanding, including money, financial safety, scams, budgeting, choices, aspiration and employability;
- understand rights, responsibilities, equality, diversity, community participation and citizenship;
- build confidence, resilience, self-regulation, communication, problem-solving and decision-making;
- prepare for adulthood, community participation, further education, employment where appropriate, independent living and meaningful adult lives.

4. Whole-school PSHE and personal development offer

PSHE at Pencalenick extends beyond the taught lesson. The school deliberately creates repeated opportunities for pupils to practice, generalise and apply knowledge and skills in authentic contexts.

4.1 Planned curriculum

Long- and medium-term planning ensures progressive coverage of three broad PSHE strands: Health and Wellbeing; Relationships; and Living in the Wider World. Statutory RSHE content is mapped within these strands and revisited with increasing depth.

4.2 Skills Builder

The Skills Builder Universal Framework supports a shared language for eight essential skills: Listening, Speaking, Problem Solving, Creativity, Planning, Adapting, Leadership and Teamwork. Relevant skills are explicitly linked to PSHE/RSHE learning and reinforced across lessons, enrichment and pupil leadership. Skills Builder complements, rather than replaces, the statutory knowledge pupils must learn.

4.3 Assemblies, awareness days and weekly voice questions

A planned assembly programme reinforces PSHE, safeguarding, equality, community, health, careers and preparation-for-adulthood themes. Relevant national, local, SEND and community awareness days are used selectively where they add educational value. Weekly pupil voice questions provide a regular mechanism for pupils to reflect on school life, safety, belonging, learning and personal development; themes and trends can inform curriculum review and school improvement.

4.4 Clubs, leadership, volunteering and enrichment

Clubs, pupil leadership, volunteering, Duke of Edinburgh activity, sport, creative opportunities, community participation, work-related learning, residential experiences and life-skills activities provide practical contexts in which pupils can develop relationships, confidence, independence, cultural capital and the Skills Builder skills. Participation and impact are monitored so that leaders can identify gaps in access and broaden opportunities.

4.5 Careers, Future Ready and preparation for adulthood

PSHE links directly with careers education, Future Ready learning and preparation for adulthood. Pupils learn and practice skills relating to communication, travel, community safety, self-advocacy, money, health, relationships, work, decision-making and independent living. Where appropriate, progress and experiences are captured through the school's wider tracking systems, including GridMaker and pupils' personal journey records.

5. Statutory RSHE curriculum and sequencing

Pupils receiving primary education in the ARBs are entitled to Relationships Education and Health Education. Pupils receiving secondary education are entitled to RSE and Health Education. Teaching builds on prior learning and is sequenced so that foundational knowledge about safety, respect, bodies, relationships and help-seeking is secure before more complex content is introduced. Appendix A distinguishes the primary and secondary outcomes.

The school does not use a fixed developmental test as a gatekeeper to statutory entitlement. Pupils may require pre-teaching, additional repetition, adapted communication, smaller steps or individual reinforcement. The sequence may be personalised, but pupils are not denied essential safeguarding knowledge because of SEND.

5.1 Primary ARB Relationships Education and Health Education

The primary ARBs teach families and people who care for me; caring friendships; respectful and online relationships; being safe, including privacy, personal boundaries, safe and unsafe touch, trusted adults and reporting concerns; and health and wellbeing, including feelings, physical activity, healthy eating, medicines, hygiene, sleep, first aid and the changing adolescent body. Teaching is planned against the primary statutory outcomes, revisited in accessible steps, and linked to everyday situations, safeguarding and the transition to secondary learning. Chronological age, communication, cognition and individual risk inform teaching without withholding essential knowledge.

Any additional primary sex education outside the science curriculum is identified distinctly in the curriculum map and shared with parents in advance. The school consults parents about its content and supports them to discuss it with their child. Primary science content, including relevant learning about puberty and reproduction, remains part of the science curriculum.

5.2 Secondary relationships and safety

Teaching includes families and stable relationships; respectful friendships; bullying and prejudice; online relationships; consent and boundaries; sexual harassment and sexual violence;

domestic abuse; coercive and controlling behaviour; grooming and exploitation; forced marriage; FGM; stalking; harmful sexual behaviour; pornography; image sharing; and how to report concerns and access support.

5.3 Secondary intimate and sexual relationships

At secondary level, pupils are taught statutory content about intimate and sexual relationships, including the age of consent, sexual consent, choices about sex, contraception, pregnancy choices, sexually transmitted infections, safer sex, sexual and reproductive health services, and how alcohol or drugs can affect sexual decision-making. Content is factual, medically accurate, legally accurate, sensitive and appropriate to pupils' age and maturity.

5.4 Secondary health and wellbeing

Health Education includes mental wellbeing, physical health and fitness, healthy eating, drugs/alcohol/tobacco/vaping, health prevention, first aid, changing adolescent bodies, sleep, dental health, vaccination and immunisation, self-care, healthcare services, personal safety and online wellbeing. The school also considers how to address self-harm, eating disorders and suicide prevention safely, using appropriately trained staff and specialist advice where direct teaching is planned.

6. Inclusion, SEND, accessibility and preparation for adulthood

Teaching is developed so that PSHE/RSHE is accessible to pupils with SEND and prepares them for adulthood. The school recognises that some pupils with SEND may be particularly vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, bullying, manipulation, financial exploitation and misunderstanding of social or online cues.

- use clear, concrete and non-ambiguous language, including correct anatomical vocabulary;
- use symbols, visuals, communication aids, assistive technology, modelling, rehearsal, social narratives and structured scenarios where helpful;
- break complex concepts into smaller steps and revisit them frequently;
- provide pre-teaching, post-teaching, 1:1 or small-group reinforcement where this is the safest and most effective approach;
- connect learning to EHCP outcomes and Personal Learning Goals where relevant without reducing statutory entitlement;
- teach public/private understanding, boundaries, consent, trusted adults, help-seeking and protective behaviours explicitly;
- make reasonable adjustments for sensory, physical, communication, cognitive and emotional needs;
- avoid assuming that a pupil's chronological age, verbal ability or apparent confidence equates to understanding.

Where an individual safeguarding concern requires tailored protective education, the DSL will oversee the response in partnership with relevant staff and agencies. Such intervention is safeguarding support and does not remove the need for the planned curriculum.

7. Safeguarding, Protective Behaviours and sensitive content

Safeguarding is a continuous thread through PSHE/RSHE. The school's Protective Behaviours approach reinforces the principle that every child has the right to feel safe all of the time, alongside learning about feelings, early warning signs, networks of trusted adults, boundaries, choice, control, time limits and safe help-seeking.

Teaching supports pupils to distinguish between positive risk-taking and unsafe situations. Pupils are helped to recognise grooming, coercion, manipulation, exploitation, harassment, abuse, harmful online contact and financial exploitation. Staff make clear that responsibility for abuse rests with the person causing harm, not the victim.

Lessons are planned to minimise unnecessary distress. Staff avoid sensational or fear-based teaching and do not use material that gives instructions for self-harm, suicide, eating-disorder behaviours or other dangerous acts. Where specialist topics are taught directly, staff training, evidence-based resources and safeguarding arrangements are put in place first.

8. Equality, diversity and teaching contested issues

PSHE/RSHE is taught in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Pupils learn the importance of equality, dignity and respect and, by the end of secondary education, the law relating to the protected characteristics.

Teaching reflects different family structures and relationships without stigmatising pupils because of their family circumstances, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, or other protected status.

At secondary level, pupils have an equal opportunity to learn about the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships, and relevant content is integrated within the programme rather than treated as an isolated topic.

Where issues are politically or socially contested, staff distinguish established facts and law from opinion and debate, present appropriate competing views in a balanced way, and do not promote partisan political views. Teaching about biological sex and gender reassignment follows current statutory guidance and the Equality Act, with respect for pupils and families and without stereotyping or harassment.

9. Teaching, learning and resources

Teaching is structured, calm, explicit and responsive. Ground rules are established for discussion, including respect, the limits of confidentiality, and the use of hypothetical examples rather than pressure to disclose personal experiences.

- Learning builds from baseline knowledge and is revisited to strengthen retrieval and generalisation.
- Teachers use questioning, scenarios, role play, sorting, visuals, practical rehearsal and low-stakes checks for understanding.

- Resources are reviewed for accuracy, accessibility, age/maturity appropriateness, safeguarding and equality implications.
- Correct anatomical and safeguarding vocabulary is taught consistently.
- Staff do not rely on a single commercial scheme to determine entitlement or sequencing.
- Cross-curricular links are made with science, computing, PE, RE, citizenship, careers, English and other relevant subjects while maintaining clear accountability for statutory RSHE coverage.

10. Parent/carers partnership, transparency and withdrawal

10.1 Consultation and transparency

The school consults parents/carers when developing and reviewing this policy, including provision in the primary ARBs. Parents are informed in advance about planned content, particularly any additional primary sex education, and can view all curriculum materials used in Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education. The school explains which lessons contain sex education, which content forms part of science, and how teaching is adapted for pupils with SEND.

The policy is published on the school website and is available free of charge. Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss questions or concerns with the class/tutor team and PSHE/RSHE Lead.

10.2 Right to request withdrawal from sex education

Parents/carers cannot withdraw a pupil from Relationships Education, Health Education or relevant science curriculum content. Where additional sex education is provided to pupils receiving primary education, the Headteacher must grant a request for withdrawal from that sex education, except for science content. In secondary education, parents/carers may request withdrawal from some or all sex education delivered as part of RSE; the Headteacher may refuse only in exceptional circumstances, for example where safeguarding concerns or a pupil's specific vulnerability justify doing so.

Before a decision is made, the Headteacher will normally discuss the request with the parent/carers and, where appropriate, the pupil, clarify which content is included, consider the benefits of participation and any effects of withdrawal, and keep a written record. In secondary schools, a request may be refused in exceptional circumstances, for example where there are safeguarding concerns or a pupil has a specific vulnerability.

The discussion and decision are recorded, with the particular lessons and content affected made clear to staff and parents/carers.

As pupils approach the age of 16, the statutory guidance gives young people an increasing say in the sex education they receive. From three terms before their 16th birthday, if a pupil tells us that they would like to receive sex education, the school will work sensitively with the pupil and their parent/carers and make arrangements for this education to be provided during one of those terms.

For pupils with SEND, we will ensure that information is explained in an accessible and appropriate way so that pupils are supported to understand and communicate their wishes.

Where a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, they will be provided with appropriate and purposeful alternative education during this time.

11. Pupil voice and participation

Pupil voice is an important source of evidence about whether PSHE/RSHE is understood, relevant, safe and accessible. The school gathers pupil views through lesson feedback, class/tutor discussion, the weekly whole-school voice question, pupil leadership structures, surveys and targeted consultation.

Pupil voice is used to identify misconceptions, emerging concerns, gaps in experience, barriers to participation and themes affecting safety, belonging and wellbeing. It informs curriculum adaptation and wider school improvement, but does not replace professional judgement or statutory curriculum requirements.

12. Assessment, recording and monitoring

Assessment in PSHE/RSHE is primarily formative and focuses on what pupils know, understand and can apply. It is not based on judging pupils' personal values, family circumstances or private experiences.

- baseline checks at the start of units or themes;
- observation, questioning, retrieval, true/false activities, sorting and scenario-based responses;
- demonstration of practical skills, communication, decision-making and help-seeking;
- review against intended curriculum end points and personalised goals where relevant;
- pupil self-reflection and voice;
- monitoring of participation in wider personal development opportunities where this is relevant to equity and access.

The PSHE/RSHE Lead monitors curriculum coverage, sequencing, resource quality, teaching, assessment evidence and pupil voice. Senior leaders triangulate this with safeguarding information, behaviour and attendance patterns, personal development evidence, participation data and feedback from staff and families. GridMaker and other school systems may be used to capture wider preparation-for-adulthood and skills evidence; they do not replace subject assessment of statutory RSHE knowledge.

13. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Key responsibilities
Local Governing Body	Approves the policy; assures itself that statutory duties are met; monitors quality, accessibility, parental transparency and the right of withdrawal; ensures the subject is appropriately led, resourced and reviewed.
Headteacher	Ensures consistent implementation; oversees statutory compliance; manages withdrawal requests;

	ensures appropriate staff training and safeguarding arrangements.
PSHE/RSHE Lead	Maintains curriculum maps and progression; checks statutory coverage; reviews resources; supports staff; coordinates training; monitors teaching, assessment and pupil voice; liaises with safeguarding, careers/PfA and senior leaders.
Designated Safeguarding Lead / safeguarding team	Advises on emerging safeguarding themes, disclosures, vulnerable pupils and tailored protective education; ensures concerns arising from lessons are responded to in line with safeguarding procedures.
Teachers and tutors	Plan from the agreed curriculum; adapt access without removing entitlement; establish safe ground rules; use accurate language; assess understanding; manage questions appropriately; report safeguarding concerns promptly.
All staff	Model respectful relationships and reinforce consistent language around safety, boundaries, equality, communication and help-seeking across the school day.
Pupils	Are supported to participate at an appropriate level, treat others with respect, ask questions safely, and contribute to pupil voice and evaluation.
Parents/carers	Are encouraged to engage with curriculum information, view materials, discuss concerns and reinforce safety and wellbeing messages at home.

14. External visitors and agencies

External visitors can enhance PSHE/RSHE but do not replace the school's responsibility for curriculum quality and safeguarding. Before a visitor delivers content, the school will check suitability and credentials, agree learning objectives, review lesson plans and materials in advance, consider political impartiality and commercial interests, clarify confidentiality and safeguarding arrangements, and ensure content is accessible for pupils with SEND.

Where required by the statutory guidance, parents/carers will be informed or consulted about external resources and will be able to view materials. Staff remain present and responsible for the lesson unless a different arrangement has been specifically risk assessed and authorised.

15. Confidentiality, questions and disclosures

Pupils are told that staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality. If a pupil shares information indicating that they or another child may be at risk, staff follow the school safeguarding procedure and record/report the concern promptly.

Questions are answered factually, sensitively and in a way that is appropriate to the pupil's age, maturity, communication needs and the planned curriculum. Staff may defer a question where an immediate answer would be inappropriate, but will ensure the pupil receives a safe and suitable

response. Pupils are never encouraged to disclose personal sexual experiences in a group lesson.

Where a pupil has been withdrawn from sex education, staff will not deliberately teach the withdrawn content during that period, while still responding appropriately to safeguarding concerns and maintaining the pupil's entitlement to Relationships Education, Health Education and science.

16. Monitoring, evaluation and policy review

The PSHE/RSHE Lead and senior leaders evaluate the policy and curriculum through planning scrutiny, lesson visits, resource review, assessment evidence, pupil voice, staff feedback, parent/carer feedback and relevant safeguarding and personal-development information. Findings inform staff development and curriculum improvement.

This policy will be formally reviewed at least annually because of the safeguarding and statutory nature of the subject, and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding priorities or school provision changes. Parents/carers will be consulted when the RSE policy is developed or reviewed.

Appendix A – Statutory RSHE curriculum coverage

The detailed curriculum maps for the primary ARBs and secondary provision identify where each statutory outcome is taught, revisited and assessed. Primary content is expected to be covered by the end of primary education; secondary provision builds on it and covers the additional outcomes by the end of secondary education.

Primary ARB statutory entitlement

Relationships Education: families and people who care for me; caring friendships; respectful relationships; online relationships; being safe, including boundaries, privacy, recognising unsafe situations, asking for help and reporting concerns. Pupils learn to recognise a range of families without stigma and to treat others with dignity and respect.

Health Education: general wellbeing and emotional vocabulary; mental wellbeing and how to seek support; internet safety and harms; physical health and fitness; healthy eating; drugs, alcohol, tobacco and medicines; health and prevention, including hygiene, dental health and sleep; basic first aid; and the changing adolescent body, including puberty. Planning checks the detailed DfE primary outcomes rather than relying only on these headings.

Additional primary sex education, if offered: the planned content and teaching materials are identified separately, discussed with parents/carers in advance, and subject to the primary withdrawal rule. Relevant science curriculum teaching remains compulsory.

Secondary statutory entitlement

Relationships

- families and different types of committed relationships
- respectful relationships and friendships
- online and media
- being safe, consent and boundaries
- sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour, domestic abuse, stalking, grooming and exploitation
- intimate and sexual relationships, contraception, pregnancy choices, STIs and sexual health

Health and wellbeing

- mental wellbeing and emotional vocabulary
- online wellbeing, misinformation/disinformation and harmful content
- physical health and fitness
- healthy eating
- drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping and nicotine
- health and prevention, dental health, sleep, vaccination and healthcare services
- basic first aid
- changing adolescent body and puberty
- personal safety, including roads, rail, water, violence/knife crime and unfamiliar settings

Appendix B – Pencalenick whole-school enrichment and reinforcement

Whole-school strand	Contribution to PSHE/RSHE	Examples of evidence
Skills Builder	Shared language for essential skills and explicit practice of communication, teamwork, problem solving, resilience and aspiration.	Skill baselines, lesson links, pupil reflection, GridMaker evidence.
Assemblies & awareness days	Reinforce safeguarding, equality, health, community, citizenship and preparation-for-adulthood messages.	Assembly calendar, resources, pupil responses.
Weekly pupil voice	Regular feedback on safety, belonging, learning, wellbeing and school experience.	Weekly question record, themes, actions and feedback loop.
Clubs & enrichment	Belonging, friendships, confidence, interests, cultural capital and healthy use of leisure time.	Registers, participation analysis, pupil journey records.
Leadership & volunteering	Voice, responsibility, teamwork, community contribution and purposeful roles.	Leadership roles, volunteering evidence, Skills Builder links.
Duke of Edinburgh	Independence, teamwork, physical wellbeing, volunteering and practical life skills.	Section evidence, expedition/life-skills records.
Careers / Future Ready / PfA	Money, work, community participation, travel, self-advocacy, employability and independent living.	Careers events, employer encounters, work experience, GridMaker.
Residential & life skills	Practical self-care, relationships, routines, cooking, laundry, independence and safe decision-making.	Journey folders, independence records, pupil reflection.

Appendix C – Parent/carers transparency and withdrawal process

1. Parents/carers of primary and secondary pupils are informed about the planned curriculum, including any additional primary sex education, and how to view all teaching materials.
2. A parent/carers wishing to request withdrawal from sex education contacts the Headteacher or PSHE/RSHE Lead.
3. The Headteacher discusses the request with the parent/carers and, where appropriate, the pupil; the discussion and outcome are recorded.
4. The school identifies precisely which content is sex education and which remains compulsory Relationships Education, Health Education or science; for primary pupils, a request to withdraw from additional sex education is automatically granted.
5. For secondary pupils, the Headteacher normally grants the request until three terms before the pupil turns 16; refusal is possible only in exceptional circumstances. The discussion, decision and affected lessons are recorded.

6. During withdrawal, the pupil receives purposeful alternative education.
7. For secondary pupils, from three terms before age 16 the pupil may opt back into sex education. The school ensures that pupils understand this option in an accessible way and makes arrangements if it is exercised.

Appendix D – Key linked policies and guidance

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Online Safety Policy; Behaviour Policy; Anti-Bullying Policy; Equality Policy/Objectives; SEND Policy; Careers / Provider Access arrangements; Teaching and Learning Policy; Visitor/Speaker procedures; Mental Health and Wellbeing arrangements; Attendance Policy.
- DfE: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance, effective 1 September 2026.
- DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- DfE: Political impartiality in schools.
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- PSHE Association SEND and wider PSHE resources, where used as non-statutory curriculum support.
- Education for a Connected World / current online-safety education resources, where used.