

4.9 Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. At Wigmore School we have always included elements of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) within our Life Skills programme. However, from September 2020, The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 now requires that all pupils in secondary education be taught RSE. Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (June 2019) statutory guidance sets out the required RSE content while giving schools the freedom to deliver that content within a broad and balanced curriculum.
- 1.2. This policy covers the school's approach to teaching RSE. It is informed by the statutory guidance referred to above and also by PSHE Association Guidance. Further guidance was taken from Herefordshire Council RSE workshops and legislation and statutory guidance including the Equality Act 2010 and *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025*.
- 1.3. Effective partnership between home and school is vital for providing the context for any RSE programme and this policy will continue to be reviewed with the school community. It should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
 - Positive Mental Wellbeing Policy
 - Peer on Peer Abuse Policy
 - Equal Opportunities Policy

2. Rationale and Ethos

- 2.1. At Wigmore School, we see RSE as just one part of a lifelong process of learning about relationships, emotions, sex, sexuality and sexual health. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.
- 2.2. Our overarching aim in RSE is to give pupils the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. Our teaching of RSE should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. We aim to teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships, to help students understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.
- 2.3. Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It aims to teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It should enable young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and support them to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time. We aim to impart knowledge about safer sex and sexual health to ensure that our students are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. This will be delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way and allow scope for students to ask questions in a safe environment. The School Nurse also provides a drop-in service at lunchtimes that pupils can access for health support and advice, including advice around relationships, sexual health and contraception.
- 2.4. Through our Life Skills programme and our pastoral care, we aim to foster the personal, moral, spiritual, social and cultural development of our students, as well as helping to enhance their ability to cope with life and its demands. We aim to inspire and encourage our students to become kinder, more confident, more thoughtful and more responsible citizens in the communities in which they live and work now and in the future.
- 2.5. An understanding of the range of issues discussed and explored in Life Skills contributes to the positive mental wellbeing of our pupils. In addition to this mental health awareness is explored in curriculum lessons, LifeSkills sessions and days and through the tutor time programme.
- 2.6. The RSE curriculum endeavours to implement and uphold British Values as outlined in: Promoting Fundamental British Values in SMSC (2014).

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1. The responsibility for the school's RSE policy lies with the Trustees. This policy is subject to review and approval by the Trustees of Wigmore School Academy Trust. In School, the Life Skills Co-

ordinator is responsible for the implementation and review of the policy, supported by the Assistant Headteacher, Safeguarding and Student Care.

- 3.2. RSE is delivered by form tutors, science teachers and life skills teachers, with input from specialists outside of school who would bring expertise and context to particular topics.
- 3.3. We recognise that parents and/or carers play a key role in teaching their children about relationships and sex. The school aims to work with parents and carers to support them in preparing their children for happy and fulfilled relationships in adult life. Examples of the resources we use in RSE lessons can be made available to parents and/or carers upon request through a presentation by the Life Skills Co-ordinator. If parents are not able to attend a presentation, paper copies of example resources can be provided. If this should be the case, parents and/or carers must agree to not copy the content of the resources or share it further (except as authorised under copyright law).
- 3.4. As a school we are committed to fighting issues such as 'period poverty'. Therefore, pupils are able to obtain sanitary products without charge if they need them.

4. Curriculum design

- 4.1. At Wigmore School we have chosen to deliver RSE mainly as part of a timetabled Life Skills programme and additional days and sessions, supplemented with various extra-curricular talks and activities. Aspects of RSE content are complemented by parts of other curriculum areas e.g. Biology.

5. Equality

- 5.1. Schools are required to comply with relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation: the Protected Characteristics. Schools must also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage and be mindful of the SEND Code of Practice (2015) when planning for the provision of RSE and other subjects.
- 5.2. We will consider whether it may be appropriate or necessary to put in place additional support for pupils with particular protected characteristics. We will also be pro-active and responsive to issues such as "everyday sexism", misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled.
- 5.3. RSE must be accessible for all students and high-quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility. The School will refer to the SEND Code of Practice, where appropriate, and will also be aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND, as detailed in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)*. RSE can be particularly important for those with social, emotional and mental health needs or learning disabilities, and such factors will be taken into consideration when designing and teaching the RSE curriculum.
- 5.4. In teaching RSE, we will ensure that the needs of all students e.g. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBTQ+), are appropriately met and that all students understand the importance of equality and respect. All teaching will be sensitive and age appropriate, in both approach and content.

6. Safe and Effective Practice

- 6.1. We will ensure a safe learning environment by requiring that certain 'ground rules' are established for each session and clearly understood by all those who take part. These may vary depending on the age of the students but are likely to include:
 - Guidance on how potentially sensitive questions can be asked;
 - A general expectation of privacy and the importance of being able to talk frankly in the session without fear of discussions being repeated outside the room without due cause;
 - How staff will respond if anyone shares anything they consider to be concerning, particularly any issues of a safeguarding nature. They must refer to the Wigmore School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for procedures e.g. they must not promise confidentiality;
 - The promotion of 'distancing techniques' that encourage pupils not to personalise their questions or discussions.
- 6.2. Any urgent and/or safeguarding issues must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Please see Section 7.

7. Safeguarding

- 7.1. Effective delivery of RSE necessarily allows students an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues, which may in turn lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. All staff are trained in child protection and, if they receive a disclosure or have any concerns about a student in their class, should follow the school's normal safeguarding procedures as set out in the Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy and Working Document.
- 7.2. Where visiting speakers are invited to support delivery of certain aspects of the RSE curriculum (for example, West Mercia Police Sexting workshops), they will be subject to the school's usual procedures for vetting visiting speakers. In addition, the member of staff responsible for the talk will brief them in advance regarding the school's safeguarding procedures and their RSE sessions will be attended by a member of school staff.

8. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

- 8.1. Staff are given an opportunity to reflect critically on delivery of the RSE curriculum through meetings with the Life Skills Co-ordinator, Assistant Headteacher, Safeguarding and Student Care.
- 8.2. Students will have opportunities to review and reflect on their learning during lessons and the School Council. Student voice will be influential in adapting and amending planned learning activities.
- 8.3. The Assistant Headteacher reports on RSE provision to the Trustees annually.

9. Parents and Carers

- 9.1. This policy is made available to parents on the school website.
- 9.2. The Lifeskills curriculum overview in Appendix A is made available to parents on the school website and a paper copy and more detailed information is available on request. For KS4 the themes and topics being covered in life skills sessions and days are shown in Appendix A; any additional information required can be made available on request.
- 9.3. In addition, we will work closely with parents to ensure that they are fully aware of the aspects of RSE that are delivered.
- 9.4. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from sex education at Wigmore School up to three terms before their child turns 16 in line with government guidance. From that point onwards, if a student wishes to receive sex education, the school will arrange for this to happen before they turn 16. If they have already missed the timetabled sex education lessons, this will usually take the form of sessions with the Life Skills Co-ordinator or another specialist teacher.
- 9.5. When students are withdrawn from sex education, alternative arrangements will be made for these students. The right to withdraw from lessons relates only to sex education in RSE, and not to the teaching of the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction included within Wigmore School's science curriculum. If parents have any queries or wish to withdraw their child from the sex education element of RSE, they should contact the relevant Associate Headteacher. There is no right to withdraw from the 'relationships' aspect of RSE.

10. RSE Policy Review

- 10.1. This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of pupils, staff and parents, and that it is in line with current Department for Education advice and guidance.

Person Responsible	Elizabeth Long Paul Bescoby
Last Updated	December 2025
Review Date	December 2026



Life Skills curriculum overview (long term plan)

	Autumn		Spring		Summer	
Year 7	Relationships	Health	Empathy	Keeping safe	Mental health	Equality
Year 8	Healthy relationships	Sex and healthy relationships	Mental health	Physical health	World issues	Careers and workplace skills
Year 9	Substance abuse	Staying safe (sex and healthy relationships)	Equality		Mental and physical health	Careers and work-related learning
Year 10	Healthy relationships		Mental and physical health		Careers	
Year 11	Making choices		Your impact (road safety event)			

*Our Life Skills and careers curriculum runs in conjunction with our active tutoring programme which takes place during registration.

**Our school RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) policy is available in the statutory policies section of our website. Topics such as contraception, sexual health, relationships and consent are taught from Y7-Y11 in an age-appropriate way. If you require any further details of material covered and resources used, please contact the school.

*** Throughout Years 9, 10 and 11, pupils are given careers support from our career adviser. Information about potential careers is embedded into our Life Skills lessons and sessions at KS3 and KS4, as well as assemblies.