



Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RHSE) Policy

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Chair of Governors:

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Headteacher:

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1. Ethos of The Orchard School

At The Orchard School, ***Everyone Matters, Everyone Cares***. Our ethos is rooted in the belief that every child has the potential to grow, thrive, and succeed when provided with the right environment, relationships, and support. The Orchard Way guides everything we do, ensuring that our approach is therapeutic, inclusive, and centred on understanding behaviour as communication. We are committed to nurturing the social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs of our pupils, recognising their unique challenges while celebrating their individuality. Through strong relationships and a culture of care, we create a school where every pupil feels safe, valued, and empowered to reach their full potential.

Principles of Our Ethos

1. Respect for the Individual: Every pupil deserves respect, dignity, and the opportunity to be heard.
2. Relationships at the Heart of Learning: Positive, trusting relationships form the foundation of our work.
3. Equity and Inclusion: We ensure all pupils have access to the support they need to succeed.
4. Therapeutic and Nurturing Approaches: We integrate trauma-informed strategies to promote resilience.
5. High Expectations with Compassion: Balancing aspirations with understanding and personalisation.
6. Collaboration with Stakeholders: Families, carers, and agencies work together to support pupils.
7. A Safe and Predictable Environment: Structure and boundaries foster trust and confidence.
8. Restorative Practices: Addressing conflicts through understanding, accountability, and growth.

Ethos in the Context of RSHE

Relationships, Sex and Health Education is inseparable from this ethos. It contributes directly to our safeguarding culture, our therapeutic approach, and our commitment to



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preparing pupils for safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives. RSHE at The Orchard builds on these principles by ensuring that pupils are taught in a way that is respectful, inclusive, and responsive to their individual needs, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to form positive relationships, make safe choices, and thrive in adulthood.

2. Purpose

The purpose of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) at The Orchard School is to provide every pupil with the knowledge, skills and values they need to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives. RSHE equips pupils to build positive relationships, to understand themselves and others, to make informed choices, and to navigate the opportunities and challenges of modern life with confidence and resilience.

RSHE is a statutory requirement for all schools and is integral to our safeguarding culture. At The Orchard, it is not treated as a standalone subject but is embedded across the curriculum, personal development, therapeutic practice, and daily school life. Through this integrated approach, RSHE supports the development of pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs while preparing them for the responsibilities and experiences of adulthood.

This policy sets out how The Orchard School will:

- Deliver RSHE in line with statutory requirements and government guidance.
- Ensure that all RSHE teaching reflects and reinforces our school ethos and values.
- Provide age-appropriate, inclusive and accessible RSHE for all pupils, including those with SEND.
- Address safeguarding priorities, including online safety, consent, child-on-child abuse and harmful sexual behaviours.
- Equip pupils with the ability to recognise and manage risk, both offline and online.
- Support pupils in developing resilience, respect for others, and a strong sense of personal identity.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers and external agencies to ensure RSHE meets the needs of all members of our school community.

Through RSHE, The Orchard School seeks to empower pupils to make safe, respectful and responsible choices throughout their lives, underpinned by the therapeutic, relational and inclusive ethos of our school.

3. Statutory Framework & Guidance

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) at The Orchard School is delivered in full accordance with statutory requirements and government guidance. This policy reflects the **Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education statutory guidance (DfE, 2019)**, while also anticipating and adopting elements of the **updated statutory guidance (DfE, July 2025)**, which becomes compulsory from **September 2026**. The Orchard School has chosen to adopt aspects of the revised guidance early in order to strengthen safeguarding and ensure best practice.

The policy is grounded in the **Children and Social Work Act 2017**, which requires Relationships Education at primary level and Relationships and Sex Education at secondary level, alongside compulsory Health Education for all pupils. It also reflects the **Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019**, which established the compulsory status of RSHE for schools.

The **Education Act 2002 (Section 78)** requires all schools to provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum which promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development, and prepares them for the responsibilities and experiences of later life. **Section 403 of the Education Act 1996** further requires schools to have regard to the Secretary of State's guidance on teaching about the nature of marriage and family life.

The **Equality Act 2010** places a duty on schools to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, ensuring that RSHE is accessible and inclusive for all pupils, including those with protected characteristics.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025) sets out safeguarding responsibilities for all schools, including the role of RSHE in teaching about consent, healthy relationships, online safety and protecting children from harm. This is supported by **Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2023)**, which emphasises the role of education in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

The updated statutory RSHE guidance (**DfE, July 2025**) strengthens requirements around:

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- teaching accurate **anatomical vocabulary** to support safeguarding and disclosure
- addressing **violence against women and girls (VAWG)**, online misogyny and pornography
- safeguarding against **self-harm, suicide and mental health risks** in age-appropriate ways
- teaching about **online harms**, including disinformation, deepfakes, financial exploitation and AI-generated content
- clarifying the **right of parents to withdraw** pupils from non-science sex education, with new rules applying from September 2026

The **Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (2025)** highlights the importance of personal development, safeguarding and the effectiveness of RSHE in preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. The **DfE Filtering and Monitoring Standards (2024)** require schools to ensure that pupils' online access is safe and that RSHE teaching addresses online risks.

This policy should be read alongside the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**, the **Relational and Therapeutic Behaviour Policy**, the **Online Safety Policy**, the **Social Media Policy**, the **SEND Policy**, and the **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy**. Together, these frameworks ensure that RSHE at The Orchard School is not only compliant with statutory duties but also forward-looking, safeguarding-led and aligned with the therapeutic and inclusive ethos of our school.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, governors, volunteers, parents and carers, and external agencies working with The Orchard School. It sets out the entitlement of every pupil to high-quality, inclusive and age-appropriate Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE), and the responsibilities of all adults in the school community to deliver, support and uphold this entitlement.

RSHE is delivered across the whole school and is relevant to both primary and secondary phases. In the primary phase, pupils receive Relationships Education and Health Education, including preparation for puberty and the biological elements of reproduction taught through the statutory science curriculum. In the secondary phase, pupils receive the full statutory programme of Relationships and Sex Education, alongside Health Education.

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All RSHE is taught in a way that is both age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate, with adaptations made to meet the specific needs of our pupils as an SEMH special school.

In line with the **Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education statutory guidance (DfE, 2019)** and the **updated statutory guidance (DfE, July 2025, effective from September 2026)**, parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents retain the right to withdraw their child from Sex Education outside the science curriculum, although from September 2026 the right to withdraw will operate under updated rules: withdrawal at primary must always be granted, while at secondary level the Headteacher may only refuse in exceptional safeguarding circumstances.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**, the **Relational and Therapeutic Behaviour Policy**, the **Online Safety Policy**, the **SEND Policy**, and the **Social Media Policy**, as RSHE is closely linked to the wider safeguarding and personal development framework of the school.

The scope of this policy also extends to RSHE taught in Personal Development lessons, cross-curricular subjects such as Science, Computing, PE, Food and Religious Education, and to enrichment activities, assemblies, therapeutic interventions, and the day-to-day lived experience of pupils and staff.

5. Principles of RSHE at The Orchard

RSHE at The Orchard School is rooted in our ethos, *Everyone Matters, Everyone Cares*, and reflects the therapeutic, relational and inclusive approach that underpins all aspects of school life. It is guided by the following principles:

RSHE is child centred. The needs, wellbeing and voices of pupils are at the heart of all teaching and learning. As an SEMH special school, our provision is carefully adapted to meet the developmental needs, learning profiles and personal circumstances of our pupils, ensuring that teaching is accessible, meaningful and relevant.

RSHE is therapeutic and trauma informed. We recognise that some pupils may have experienced adversity or trauma that shapes how they engage with sensitive topics. Teaching is delivered with compassion, predictability and care, so that pupils feel safe, regulated and supported.

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RSHE is inclusive and equitable. Pupils are taught to understand and respect diversity in all its forms, including differences in family structures, sexual orientation, gender identity, culture, faith and disability. The curriculum ensures that all pupils can access their entitlement without discrimination and are represented and respected in what they learn.

RSHE is safeguarding-led. It plays a vital role in protecting pupils by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to recognise unsafe or harmful behaviours, to understand consent and respect, and to remain safe both offline and online. In line with **Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)** and the **updated RSHE guidance (DfE, July 2025)**, this includes teaching pupils to use accurate anatomical vocabulary when talking about their bodies, addressing issues of violence against women and girls (VAWG), challenging misogyny, and responding to harmful online content including pornography.

RSHE is relational and restorative. It builds on the strong, trusting relationships that exist within the school and reflects our commitment to restorative practices, empathy and accountability.

RSHE is preparatory for adulthood. Pupils are supported to develop the knowledge, values and resilience needed to make informed decisions about their health, wellbeing, relationships and future lives in modern Britain. This includes preparing them to navigate emerging challenges such as disinformation, online exploitation, and pressures around self-harm and mental health.

6. Curriculum Content and Delivery

The RSHE curriculum at The Orchard School is designed not only to meet statutory requirements but to go beyond them, providing pupils with a rich, therapeutic and inclusive programme that prepares them for safe, healthy and fulfilling lives. As an SEMH special school, our curriculum is carefully adapted to reflect the developmental needs, lived experiences and personal circumstances of our pupils. It is delivered in ways that promote trust, dignity and engagement, ensuring that learning is meaningful and accessible to all.

6.1 Relationships Education

Pupils learn about the importance of safe, respectful and healthy relationships. Teaching covers families and different family structures, friendships, boundaries,



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respect, trust, consent, equality and diversity. Pupils are supported to recognise the characteristics of positive and negative relationships, both offline and online, and are taught strategies for seeking help and support when needed.

In line with the **updated RSHE guidance (DfE, July 2025)**, this includes explicit teaching around violence against women and girls (VAWG), harmful sexual behaviours, misogyny, and the influence of pornography on attitudes and expectations.

6.2 Sex Education

At primary level, pupils are taught the statutory science curriculum, which includes the biological aspects of reproduction and preparation for puberty. At secondary level, pupils receive age-appropriate sex education that builds on this knowledge. This includes consent, sexual health, contraception, prevention of sexually transmitted infections, and protection from exploitation or abuse. Delivery is adapted to the maturity, readiness and needs of learners, with content always presented in a safe, factual and sensitive manner.

In accordance with the updated guidance, all pupils are taught to use accurate anatomical vocabulary for body parts, empowering them to communicate clearly, report concerns and safeguard themselves more effectively.

6.3 Health Education

Health Education enables pupils to understand the factors that contribute to their physical and mental wellbeing. Topics include mental health and resilience, emotional regulation, healthy lifestyles, diet and exercise, puberty and changing bodies, substance misuse, personal safety, and managing online pressures.

Building on this, pupils also learn about suicide prevention and self-harm in a safe and age-appropriate way, ensuring that content promotes resilience without sharing harmful detail. They are taught about the age of criminal responsibility and how the law applies to different behaviours and risks.

6.4 Cross-Curricular and Integrated Delivery

RSHE is primarily delivered through Personal Development lessons, which provide a structured and consistent space for learning and discussion. It is reinforced across the wider curriculum, including Science, Computing, PE, Food and Religious Education,

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and is embedded through assemblies, therapeutic interventions, themed days and enrichment activities.

Teaching methods are adapted to the SEMH needs of pupils. Lessons are interactive, discussion-based and practical, with opportunities for repetition and reinforcement. Staff use restorative approaches, regulation strategies and therapeutic tools to support engagement and to help pupils process potentially challenging content. Small group or individual sessions are provided when necessary to ensure accessibility.

RSHE is taught in a way that prioritises safety and trust. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions, express views and explore topics in a respectful environment. Clear ground rules are established to promote dignity, privacy and respect for others. Where sensitive issues are raised, staff respond with neutrality, accuracy and compassion, ensuring that all teaching remains non-judgemental and evidence based.

Adaptations are made to ensure inclusivity and accessibility. This includes differentiated materials, visual supports, additional adult guidance and careful consideration of how topics are introduced and reinforced. Where appropriate, therapeutic staff contribute to RSHE delivery, ensuring that learning is aligned with pupils' wider emotional development.

Safeguarding is woven through every aspect of RSHE. The curriculum is planned and delivered in close partnership between the RSHE Lead and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), ensuring that teaching is not only compliant with statutory guidance but also anticipatory of emerging risks such as deepfakes, disinformation, online exploitation and AI-generated content, and responsive to the needs of our pupils.

7. Safeguarding & Child Protection

RSHE is a core component of The Orchard School's safeguarding culture. It plays a vital role in giving pupils the knowledge, skills and confidence to recognise risks, protect themselves, and seek help when needed. Themes such as consent, healthy and unhealthy relationships, online safety, child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviours are embedded throughout the curriculum in line with **Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)** and the **updated RSHE guidance (DfE, July 2025, effective September 2026)**.

The RSHE curriculum is coordinated by the Headteacher and the RSHE Lead, with safeguarding oversight provided by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputies. This partnership ensures that RSHE is fully aligned with Orchard's wider

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safeguarding policies and procedures, and that it addresses both statutory expectations and the lived safeguarding needs of our pupils.

All staff delivering RSHE receive safeguarding training as part of their induction and ongoing professional development. This includes training on handling disclosures, using accurate anatomical language, and responding to safeguarding concerns raised during lessons. Staff are also trained in managing discussions about sensitive topics such as pornography, violence against women and girls (VAWG), online misogyny, harmful sexual behaviours, suicide and self-harm.

Where a pupil makes a disclosure or raises a concern, staff follow the procedures set out in the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**, ensuring that concerns are recorded promptly and passed to the DSL without delay.

Safeguarding themes within RSHE are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain current, evidence-based and responsive to emerging risks, including those associated with online behaviour, disinformation, deepfakes, financial exploitation and AI-generated content. By embedding safeguarding throughout RSHE, The Orchard School ensures that pupils are not only taught about risks but are supported to feel safe, valued and empowered to make positive choices in their lives.

8. Online Safety & Digital Literacy

Online safety is a central element of RSHE at The Orchard School. Pupils are growing up in a digital world where opportunities and risks are closely intertwined. Our curriculum ensures that pupils have the knowledge, critical thinking skills and resilience to stay safe, use technology responsibly, and recognise when they need to seek help.

Teaching covers the full range of risks identified in the **Online Safety Act (2023)** and in **Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)**, structured around the four “Cs”:

- **Content** – being exposed to harmful material, including pornography, misogyny, extremist views, misinformation and disinformation
- **Contact** – being contacted by unsuitable, abusive or exploitative individuals online
- **Conduct** – engaging in risky, harmful or illegal behaviour themselves, such as sharing explicit images or bullying
- **Commerce** – being exploited financially, including scams, gambling, fraud and in-game purchases

In line with the **updated RSHE guidance (DfE, July 2025)**, pupils are also taught explicitly about the risks of AI-generated content, including deepfakes, synthetic media and the use of algorithms to target or manipulate behaviour. They learn how to question sources, evaluate reliability, and recognise harmful manipulation online.

Pupils are supported to understand the law, including the age of criminal responsibility, and how it applies to their online behaviour. They are taught the long-term consequences of sharing personal or intimate information, and the importance of consent, privacy and respect in digital spaces.

Online safety is embedded across the curriculum: in RSHE lessons, Computing, assemblies, enrichment activities and day-to-day use of technology. Staff model responsible digital behaviour and reinforce safe practices consistently. Filtering and monitoring systems are in place in line with the **DfE Filtering and Monitoring Standards (2024)**, and pupils are taught how these systems support their safety.

By embedding digital literacy throughout RSHE, The Orchard School ensures that pupils are not only aware of online risks but are equipped with the skills to navigate technology safely, responsibly and confidently in their daily lives.

9. Inclusion, Accessibility & Differentiation

At The Orchard School, RSHE is for every pupil. We are committed to ensuring that all teaching is inclusive, equitable and accessible, reflecting the principles of the **Equality Act 2010** and our school ethos that *Everyone Matters, Everyone Cares*.

As an SEMH special school, we recognise that our pupils may face additional barriers to accessing RSHE, including learning difficulties, communication needs, experiences of trauma and difficulties with emotional regulation. To address this, RSHE is carefully planned, adapted and differentiated to meet the developmental needs and learning profiles of every pupil.

Adaptations may include:

- simplified or visual resources
- use of symbols, visuals and communication aids
- additional adult support during sensitive topics
- delivery in smaller groups or individual sessions
- scaffolding of vocabulary, discussion and reflection
- revisiting and reinforcing content in different contexts

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Lessons are designed to be trauma-informed, with predictable structures, regulation opportunities and a focus on safety and trust. Pupils are given the time and space they need to process new information and ask questions in ways that feel safe for them.

In line with the **updated RSHE guidance (DfE, July 2025)**, teaching explicitly promotes respect for diversity, including family structures, culture, faith, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity. The curriculum challenges prejudice and discrimination, equipping pupils to show empathy, respect and understanding.

Where issues of maturity, competence and consent arise, staff are guided by the principles of **Gillick competence** and the **Fraser guidelines**, ensuring that pupils' voices and capacities are respected, and that teaching supports their ability to make safe and informed decisions.

By embedding inclusivity and accessibility into RSHE, The Orchard School ensures that every pupil is able to participate meaningfully, feel represented in the curriculum, and develop the knowledge and confidence to navigate relationships, health and wellbeing in their own lives.

10. Parental Engagement & Right to Withdraw

Parents and carers are the primary educators of their children in matters of relationships, health and values. At The Orchard School, we are committed to working in partnership with families to ensure that RSHE reflects statutory expectations while meeting the needs of our community.

The **Department for Education** requires schools to consult with parents on the development of RSHE policies. While formal consultation on this policy has not yet taken place, opportunities for parental engagement will be built into future policy reviews. This policy will be made available on the school website, and parents are encouraged to contact the school with questions or feedback at any time.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education or Health Education, as these are compulsory elements of the curriculum. Parents may request withdrawal from non-science elements of Sex Education. In line with the **updated statutory RSHE guidance (DfE, July 2025)**, which becomes compulsory from September 2026 and which The Orchard School has chosen to adopt early:

- At **primary level**, withdrawal from non-science Sex Education must always be granted.



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- At **secondary level**, the Headteacher may only refuse withdrawal in exceptional safeguarding circumstances.

The school encourages parents to consider the importance of Sex Education in preparing pupils for adulthood but recognises and respects their statutory rights. A record of withdrawal requests will be maintained in line with DfE guidance.

By being transparent and making this policy publicly available, The Orchard School ensures that parents are able to understand our approach to RSHE, engage with it meaningfully, and feel confident in the quality of teaching their children receive.

11. Pupil Voice & Participation

At The Orchard School, pupil voice is central to the design and delivery of RSHE. As an SEMH special school, we recognise that pupils learn best when they feel listened to, respected and involved in shaping their own learning.

Pupils are encouraged to share their views on RSHE through class discussions, reflective activities, feedback forms, and the school council. Anonymous methods, such as question boxes or digital surveys, are also used to enable pupils to raise questions and concerns safely and without fear of judgement.

Lessons are designed to be interactive and responsive, giving pupils opportunities to explore topics through dialogue, activities and reflection. Staff are trained to respond to questions with sensitivity and neutrality, ensuring that all contributions are valued.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, staff follow the procedures set out in the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**, and pupils are reassured that their safety and wellbeing are the priority.

In line with the **updated RSHE guidance (DfE, July 2025)**, pupil voice is especially important in shaping how sensitive and safeguarding-related content is delivered. This includes teaching around consent, harmful sexual behaviours, pornography, misogyny, violence against women and girls (VAWG), suicide, self-harm, and online risks such as disinformation and deepfakes. By listening to pupils, the school can adapt teaching so that it remains relevant, safe and meaningful.

Feedback from pupils is used to refine planning, resources and teaching approaches, ensuring that the RSHE curriculum reflects both statutory requirements and the lived experiences of our learners. This process also helps identify gaps in knowledge and areas where additional support may be required.

By embedding pupil voice in RSHE, The Orchard School ensures that pupils are not passive recipients of information but active partners in shaping a curriculum that supports their safety, wellbeing and personal development.

12. Roles & Responsibilities

The delivery of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is a whole-school responsibility. Every member of staff contributes to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive culture in which RSHE can flourish. Specific responsibilities are as follows:

Governing Body

The Governing Body holds overall responsibility for ensuring that RSHE is delivered in line with statutory requirements. Governors approve this policy, monitor its implementation, and review its impact as part of their safeguarding and curriculum oversight.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSHE is appropriately prioritised within the curriculum, that it is resourced and staffed effectively, and that delivery is aligned with the therapeutic ethos of The Orchard School. The Headteacher ensures compliance with statutory guidance and reports regularly to governors.

RSHE Lead

The RSHE Lead coordinates the planning, delivery and evaluation of RSHE across the school. They ensure that content is accessible, inclusive and developmentally appropriate for all pupils, and that it reflects statutory requirements and the updated RSHE guidance (DfE, July 2025). The RSHE Lead works closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that safeguarding themes are fully embedded, including consent, anatomical vocabulary, online safety, violence against women and girls (VAWG), pornography, misogyny, self-harm and suicide prevention.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputies

The DSL provides safeguarding oversight of RSHE. They ensure that staff know how to respond appropriately to disclosures, that safeguarding training includes RSHE-related risks (such as harmful sexual behaviours, exploitation, online harms and AI-generated content), and that the curriculum reflects emerging safeguarding priorities. The DSL

liaises with external agencies and ensures that RSHE supports the wider safeguarding culture of the school.

Staff

All staff are expected to model respectful relationships, uphold the ethos of The Orchard School and contribute to the delivery of RSHE through their daily interactions with pupils. Staff delivering RSHE receive training to ensure they are confident and well-prepared. They follow safeguarding procedures where disclosures or concerns arise and seek guidance from the RSHE Lead or DSL when needed.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage with RSHE in a respectful and constructive way, recognising the importance of these lessons for their safety, wellbeing and preparation for adulthood. They are encouraged to ask questions, share views and use the knowledge they gain to make safe and informed choices.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are recognised as the primary educators of their children in matters of relationships and health. They are encouraged to engage with the RSHE curriculum, to support the school's approach, and to raise questions or concerns with staff when necessary.

13. Staff Training & Support

High-quality RSHE depends on confident, knowledgeable and well-supported staff. At The Orchard School, all staff involved in the delivery of RSHE receive training to ensure that lessons are consistent, inclusive and aligned with statutory requirements and the therapeutic ethos of the school.

Training is provided as part of staff induction and refreshed regularly through whole-school safeguarding training, professional development sessions and targeted workshops. This training includes statutory RSHE requirements, trauma-informed approaches, SEMH and SEND adaptations, and strategies for managing sensitive discussions in a safe and supportive way.

In line with the **updated RSHE guidance (DfE, July 2025)**, training also equips staff to:

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- use accurate anatomical vocabulary confidently and appropriately
- address issues of consent, pornography, misogyny, and violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- manage discussions about suicide, self-harm and mental health safely and without harmful detail
- respond to online risks including deepfakes, disinformation, exploitation and AI-generated content

Specialist training is offered to staff with a lead role in RSHE delivery, enabling them to plan and teach with confidence and to act as a resource for colleagues. External agencies and professionals may also be invited to provide expertise in specific areas such as sexual health, mental health, or online safety.

Staff are supported to access high-quality resources and planning materials. They are encouraged to share good practice, reflect on delivery, and seek guidance from the RSHE Lead or DSL when issues arise. Where staff encounter challenging disclosures or pupil experiences, pastoral support and supervision are made available.

Through this commitment to training and support, The Orchard School ensures that RSHE is delivered with professionalism, confidence and care, enabling pupils to benefit fully from the curriculum and safeguarding them in the process.

14. Monitoring & Review

The implementation and impact of RSHE at The Orchard School are monitored regularly to ensure that the curriculum remains effective, inclusive and responsive to the needs of our pupils. Monitoring is led by the RSHE Lead in partnership with the Headteacher, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Governing Body.

Monitoring includes lesson observations, work scrutiny, staff reflection, pupil voice activities and parental feedback where available. These processes are used to evaluate the quality of teaching, the relevance of curriculum content, and the confidence of staff and pupils in engaging with RSHE.

This policy will be formally reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Governing Body, or sooner if statutory guidance changes, local safeguarding priorities shift, or significant new risks emerge. In line with the **updated RSHE guidance (DfE, July 2025, effective from September 2026)**, reviews will ensure that RSHE continues to address safeguarding priorities such as:

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- accurate anatomical vocabulary
- consent, pornography, misogyny and violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- suicide, self-harm and mental health
- online harms including deepfakes, disinformation, financial exploitation and AI-generated content

By committing to ongoing monitoring and review, The Orchard School ensures that RSHE is not only compliant with statutory expectations but also forward-looking, safeguarding-led and aligned with the therapeutic ethos of the school.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Statutory RSHE Requirements

From September 2020, all schools in England have been required to deliver Relationships Education (primary), Relationships and Sex Education (secondary), and Health Education (primary and secondary) in line with the **Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education Regulations (2019)**.

From **September 2026**, schools must comply with the **updated RSHE guidance (DfE, July 2025)**. The Orchard School has chosen to adopt these requirements early.

Relationships Education (Primary) must cover:

- families and people who care for me
- caring friendships
- respectful relationships



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- online relationships
- being safe

Relationships and Sex Education (Secondary) must cover:

- families
- respectful relationships, including friendships
- online and media
- being safe
- intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Health Education (Primary and Secondary) must cover:

- mental wellbeing
- internet safety and harms
- physical health and fitness
- healthy eating
- drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- health and prevention
- basic first aid
- changing adolescent body

Updates in the 2026 guidance also require teaching on:

- accurate anatomical vocabulary
- consent as ongoing and withdrawable
- pornography and its influence on attitudes and behaviours
- misogyny and violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- self-harm, suicide prevention and mental health awareness
- online harms, including deepfakes, disinformation, financial exploitation and AI-generated content
- age of criminal responsibility and the law relating to harmful behaviours



Appendix 2: Example RSHE Curriculum Overview

The Orchard School delivers RSHE through Personal Development lessons, cross-curricular subjects, assemblies and enrichment activities. Below is an outline example of coverage:

Key Stage 2

- Families and friendships
- Respect, kindness and inclusion
- Puberty, hygiene and growing up
- Staying safe online
- Healthy lifestyles and emotional regulation

Key Stage 3

- Building healthy relationships and trust
- Respect, consent and boundaries
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Online safety, digital literacy and AI risks
- Puberty, reproduction and introduction to sex education

Key Stage 4

- Intimate and sexual relationships, including contraception and sexual health
- Consent, respect and challenging harmful behaviours
- Violence against women and girls (VAWG) and tackling misogyny
- Substance use, risks and the law
- Preparing for adulthood: independence, resilience and safe choices



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This overview is adapted regularly in response to pupil needs, safeguarding priorities and statutory updates.

Appendix 3: Parent Withdrawal Request Form (Sex Education only)

Parents may request withdrawal from non-science elements of Sex Education. In line with the **updated RSHE guidance (DfE, July 2025)**, adopted early by The Orchard School:

- At primary level, withdrawal requests must always be granted.
- At secondary level, the Headteacher may only refuse withdrawal in exceptional safeguarding circumstances.

Withdrawal Request Form Template:

- Name of pupil: _____
- Year group: _____
- Parent/carer name: _____
- Parent/carer signature: _____
- Date: _____
- Elements of Sex Education from which withdrawal is requested:

- Headteacher response: _____

Appendix 4: Glossary of Key Terms

To support clarity and consistency, the following key terms are used in RSHE:



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- **Consent** – a freely given, ongoing agreement to participate in an activity, which can be withdrawn at any time.
- **Anatomical vocabulary** – scientifically accurate names for body parts (e.g. penis, vulva, vagina, testicles), used to promote safeguarding and accurate disclosure.
- **Harmful sexual behaviour** – sexual behaviours expressed by children or young people that are developmentally inappropriate, harmful, abusive or violent.
- **Misogyny** – attitudes, behaviours or practices that denigrate, marginalise or harm women and girls.
- **Violence against women and girls (VAWG)** – acts of violence or abuse that disproportionately affect women and girls, including harassment, exploitation and coercion.
- **Self-harm** – deliberate behaviour that causes harm to one’s own body, often linked to emotional distress.
- **Suicide prevention** – strategies to reduce the risk of suicide, including teaching about resilience, help-seeking and protective factors without providing harmful detail.
- **Deepfakes** – manipulated or synthetic digital media, often created using AI, that can spread misinformation or abuse.
- **Gillick competence** – a legal principle recognising that some children under 16 may have the maturity to make their own decisions about medical treatment.
- **Fraser guidelines** – guidance relating to the provision of contraceptive or sexual health advice to under-16s.