THE
KING'S SCHOOL
CANTERBURY

KSC

Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy (Life Matters)

Responsible Person: Deputy Head (Pastoral) & Head of Life Matters (PHSE)

Latest Review Completed: September 2026

Next Review Due: September 2027

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The King's School, Canterbury welcomed and were early adopters of the initial statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) introduced by the government in September 2020, as we believe relevant, effective and responsible education regarding relationships, health and wellbeing to be fundamental both to the personal development of our pupils, as well as to upholding the ethos and values of our school community and adherence to the Equality Act 2010.

The school's RSE curriculum has been written to comply with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and in particular the school:

- ensures that every registered pupil is provided with relationships and sex education, except in so far as the pupil is excused (see below under 'Withdrawal from sex education);
- has regard to the statutory guidance published by the DfE, which is currently 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' (July 2025, implemented September 2026);
- keeps this written statement of policy up to date;
- consults parents of registered pupils before making or revising this policy; and
- publishes a copy of this policy on the school's website and provides a copy free of charge to anyone who asks for one.

RSE and Health Education is specifically taught to all pupils in timetabled lessons as part of the school's Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE), known as Life Matters (LM). The school also promotes PSHE as part of a whole school approach. Through Life Matters, we seek to develop young people of character, kindness, integrity and wisdom who are equipped to navigate modern life with confidence, empathy and respect for themselves and others.

The School recognises that high-quality, evidence-based RSHE supports pupils to make informed and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships. Effective RSHE promotes resilience, self-respect, emotional literacy, healthy relationships and safeguarding awareness, whilst preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The Life Matters curriculum follows a spiral model, revisiting key themes as pupils mature and extending their understanding in age-appropriate and increasingly sophisticated ways.

1. Aims

Through the delivery of high quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate RSE and Health Education through the Life Matters programme, the school aims to help support pupils through adolescence, to develop their own values and identity, to promote healthy relationships with friends, family and others, and to foster a positive and safe culture in relation to sexuality. Additionally, we aim to ensure pupils have an understanding of the importance of taking care of their health, both mental and physical, and that they know how and when to ask for help and where to access support. By the end of their education the School hopes pupils will have developed resilience and feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy for others in preparation for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

2. Definitions

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) gives pupils the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to develop healthy, respectful and nurturing relationships of all kinds. This includes friendships, family relationships, relationships with peers and adults, online relationships, and understanding how and when to seek support from trusted individuals and services. There is a strong focus on the characteristics of healthy relationships and the positive impact that strong relationships can have on emotional wellbeing and mental health.

Relationships Education covers topics including friendship, kindness, empathy, consent, boundaries, effective communication, the importance of caring, stable and mutually supportive relationships, and how to understand and manage the feelings associated with relationships. Pupils learn to recognise acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, identify when relationships are unhealthy, abusive or unsafe, and understand how to seek help and report concerns. This includes learning about online relationships, digital communication and online safety, ensuring pupils understand how to protect themselves online and recognise how personal information may be used by others in ways they may not expect.

In order to safeguard pupils and promote their wellbeing, Relationships Education may also address sensitive topics, including sexual harassment, sexual violence, coercive behaviour and exploitation. These topics are taught in an age-appropriate way to help pupils recognise risks, understand their rights and responsibilities, and know how to access support.

Relationships Education also explores different types of committed and stable relationships, the legal status and characteristics of long-term relationships, the importance of marriage and civil partnerships as relationship choices that must be freely entered into, and the ways in which healthy relationships contribute to individual wellbeing and human happiness. Pupils also learn about the roles and responsibilities of parents and carers, the characteristics of positive parenting, and how to recognise when relationships have become unsafe.

Sex Education builds upon Relationships Education and includes learning about human reproduction, sexual health, contraception, sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy. The School teaches these topics in a factual, age-appropriate and non-judgemental manner that complies with relevant legislation, statutory guidance and the Equality Act 2010. The curriculum is designed to provide pupils with accurate information, encourage respectful

discussion, build confidence in asking questions, and support pupils in making safe, informed and healthy choices.

The School's RSE programme does not encourage early sexual activity or experimentation. Rather, it aims to help pupils understand human sexuality, develop self-respect and respect for others, build self-esteem, and appreciate the benefits of delaying sexual activity until they are ready. Through RSE, pupils are equipped with the knowledge and skills to develop safe, healthy and fulfilling relationships throughout their lives.

The School is committed to providing clear information to parents about the content of both Relationships Education and Sex Education. Parents will be informed about the curriculum through the School's published programme on the Parent Portal, and parents may request further information about the content and resources used.

Health Education

Health Education in the Life Matters programme aims to equip pupils with the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to make informed decisions about their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Pupils develop an understanding of healthy lifestyles, nutrition, exercise, sleep, mental health, personal safety, online wellbeing, substance misuse, relationships between physical and mental health, and how to access support when needed. The programme promotes resilience, self-awareness and personal responsibility, helping pupils develop the confidence and healthy habits required to flourish both during their school years and in adult life.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the Head of Life Matters will ensure that staff are supported and up to date with statutory changes which are clearly signposted in lesson plans. They will ensure that the Life Matters curriculum is well led, effectively managed and well planned across various subjects, and that the quality of provFision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation. The teaching will be age-appropriate, delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND and the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled appropriately.

When engaging external organisations or speaker, the visiting speakers policy will be followed: the credentials of any visitor or visiting organisation will be checked, the Head or Deputy Head of Life Matters will go through the materials to be delivered in advance, and these will be available to parents.

The Deputy Head (Pastoral) will manage parental requests for withdrawal of pupils from non-statutory, non-science components of Life Matters.

Staff

Teachers of Life Matters will ensure that they are up to date with school policy and curriculum requirements regarding sex education and will attend and engage in professional development training. Teachers should demonstrate to pupils the importance of RSE by taking the LM lessons and curriculum seriously themselves and encourage pupils also to engage seriously with the subject content. They should foster a respectful environment in which pupils can ask

questions and express their views openly and in a spirit of constructive, mutual learning. They monitor attendance and individual pupil progress and provide termly written reports summarising what has been covered over the term. Teachers will equip pupils with the knowledge of how to access more specialist help and advice, and encourage pupils to communicate concerns regarding their personal, social and emotional development in confidence, listen to their needs and support them seriously. If a pupil comes to a member of staff with an issue that the member of staff feels they are not able to deal with alone, they will take this concern to the appropriate member of staff.

Parents

The School expects parents to share the responsibility of RSE and Health Education, and support their children's personal, social and emotional development. We encourage parents to create an open home environment where pupils can engage, discuss and continue to learn about matters that have been raised through Life Matters lessons. Parents are also encouraged to ask questions and to seek clarification regarding RSE from the school where they feel it is needed. This policy, as well as an overview of topics covered, as well as sample lessons will be provided on the Parent Portal. At the end of each term, a summary of topics covered is shared with parents. Parents are also invited to comment on the curriculum and on this policy; in addition to the legal requirement to follow the statutory RSE, listening to pupil, teacher and parent voices will continue to inform how the curriculum is planned and delivered. Parents were surveyed to share their views at the end of the last academic year.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend all Life Matters lessons in their timetable as these classes are a legal requirement, an important part of the curriculum and a tool to aid personal development. The School expects pupils to recognise this and to engage constructively with the topics covered. Pupils' progress in LM will be monitored by their teacher, who will include an approach to learning in their termly report. Pupils are expected to discuss these reports with their mentors and parents and to take on board any feedback given.

Pupils should support one another with issues that arise through Life Matters by listening respectfully to others in class, and by being considerate of other people's feelings and beliefs. Complying with confidentiality rules that are set in class are key to effective provision. Pupils who regularly fail to follow these standards of behaviour will be dealt with under the School's behaviour policy. To aid this, each year will begin with the construction of a class agreement in their first lesson which will lay out an agreed code of conduct for lessons.

From time to time pupils will be asked to complete surveys regarding LM provision. Forums such as FREDIE groups and King's Council provide another avenue for pupil voices to influence the way the curriculum is delivered. All pupils are welcome also to contact the Head of Life Matters directly with ideas, suggestions, feedback or concerns at any time. We hope that pupils will feel comfortable to talk to a member of staff, in confidence, regarding any concerns they have in school related to RSE and Health Education or otherwise.

4. Implementation and Curriculum

RSE and Heath Education will be delivered in Life Matters lessons, mentor time, year group assemblies, by visiting speakers and in a variety of other subject lessons, such as Computer Science, Religious Studies, Biology and Physical Education, and will build on the foundation of the RSE delivered in primary school.

The School wishes to promote pupils' health and wellbeing by encouraging self-awareness, self-control, their ability to self-regulate and strategies for doing so. This will enable pupils to become confident in their ability to achieve well and persevere even when they encounter setbacks or when their goals are distant, and to respond calmly and rationally to setbacks and challenges. The school believes that an integrated, whole-school approach to the teaching and promotion of health and wellbeing will have a positive impact on behaviour and attainment.

The Head and Deputy Heads of Life Matters provide LM teachers with appropriate teaching materials, and encourage them to adjust these for the specific needs of the pupils in their classes. The curriculum is sequenced to build knowledge progressively and to equip pupils with information before they are likely to encounter relevant situations or risks.

The School ensures that pupils have covered all statutory content as described in the DfE's guidance, by the end of Fifth under the general topics of families; respectful relationships; online safety and awareness; being safe; and intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health.

Life Matters lessons continue into the Sixth Form, building upon topics covered in earlier years and helping to prepare pupils for life after school.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and gender-questioning (LGBGQ) children

LGBGQ content forms part of the statutory RSE curriculum. The School ensures that teaching is age appropriate, sensitive and inclusive; content is fully integrated into programmes of study; and pupils have the opportunity to learn about different types of relationships, including same-sex relationships, in a respectful and factual manner.

In particular, the School will:

- ensure that teaching is factual, balanced and does not promote or endorse any particular viewpoint where there is significant debate;
- avoid presenting contested beliefs as fact;
- avoid language or activities that reinforce harmful gender stereotypes;
- avoid suggesting that social transition is a simple solution to feelings of distress.

Where external resources are used, the School will ensure that materials are accurate, age-appropriate and balanced, do not oversimplify complex issues and do not promote stereotypes or encourage pupils to question their identity inappropriately. All materials are made available to parents on request.

Dealing with difficult questions

Pupils are encouraged to ask questions as part of their learning. Staff training will include sessions on how to deal with difficult questions. There may still be times when staff are faced with a difficult question in class that they feel uncomfortable or ill equipped to answer. In this case, they may wish to put the defer the question and seek advice from a member of the Pastoral Team.

Where appropriate, they may signpost pupils towards reliable sources of information or suggest discussion with parents or trusted adults.

Teaching staff will never knowingly provide inaccurate information and will seek advice where necessary.

Pupils with special educational needs

The School works hard to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are inclusive and support the needs of pupils of all ranges of abilities. Staff should be aware of the needs of their class and differentiate lessons to ensure that all members of the class can access the information fully, and this is no different when it comes to RSE and Health Education.

The School will use a variety of different strategies to ensure that all pupils have access to the same information. Some of these include:

- interactive teaching methods
- use of expert guest speakers
- practical activities
- appropriate video clips or documentaries
- group and paired activities

Withdrawal from Sex Education

The School hopes that parents will feel comfortable with, and understand the importance of, the education provided to their children as described in this policy. However, parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before withdrawing or making a request, the School strongly urges parents to carefully consider their decision, as Sex Education is a vital part of the curriculum and supports children's development. Parents cannot withdraw their child from Relationships or Health Education or the elements on human growth and reproduction which fall under the science curriculum.

Any parent wishing to withdraw their child from sex education should put their request in writing and send it to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who will arrange a meeting to discuss their concerns. Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the School will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, in line with government guidelines, the School will inform the child that they may opt back into sex education if they wish.

If a pupil is excused from Sex Education the school will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Complaints

Parents or carers who have complaints or concerns regarding the RSE and Health Education curriculum should contact the School and follow the complaints policy.

Equal opportunities

The School has duties under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that pupils are not discriminated against because of their sex, race, disabilities, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or pregnancy or maternity. RSE and Health Education lessons provide a good background for talking openly and freely about diversity. Prejudiced views will be challenged, and equality promoted. Bullying of any kind will be dealt with swiftly and seriously, the procedures regarding this are outlined in the School's behaviour policy.

Safeguarding and confidentiality

We hope to provide a safe and supportive community where pupils feel comfortable seeking help and guidance on anything that may be concerning them about life either at school or at home. Training around confidentiality will be provided to all teachers during INSET.

It may be the case that discussion around what is acceptable and not acceptable in relationships may lead to the disclosure of a child protection issue. If this is the case, the school's child protection and safeguarding procedure will be followed.

Pupils with special educational needs may be more vulnerable to exploitation and less able to protect themselves from harmful influences. If staff are concerned that this is the case, they should seek support from the DSL to decide what is in the best interest of the child.

5. Monitoring, review and evaluation

The educational and personal needs of our pupils develop in line with varying societal pressures and economic change. Our aim is to provide RSE that is relevant and tailored to meet the needs of our pupils, depending on their age and stage of personal development. For this reason, we review the RSE curriculum annually.

The School will review this policy annually, evaluating its effectiveness by taking into account feedback from pupils, staff and parents, as well as what has come to light through classroom observations and information we receive from national reports and curriculum reviews.

6. Publication

The school publishes a copy of this policy on its website and provides a copy free of charge to anyone who asks for one.