



WHINLESS DOWN
ACADEMY TRUST

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

September 2026

1. Statement of intent

Whinless Down Academy Trust is committed to high-quality, age-appropriate, evidence-informed personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, including statutory Relationships Education and Health Education and carefully planned primary sex education. We prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life, building knowledge, respectful relationships, confidence, wellbeing and the vocabulary to seek help.

PSHE is a taught curriculum and a preventative safeguarding and character curriculum. The Trust promotes the explicit teaching of oracy, inclusion, respect, personal boundaries and safe decision-making.

2. Scope and definitions

This Trust policy applies to Priory Fields School, Vale View Primary School and St Martin's School. It applies to staff, leaders, governors, pupils and external contributors.

PSHE includes wider personal, social, health and economic learning. Relationships Education and Health Education are compulsory in the relevant primary settings. Primary sex education beyond statutory Relationships/Health Education and the science curriculum is not compulsory. The term RSE in this policy refers to the integrated relationships and optional sex education programme.

3. Statutory framework

The Trust has regard to the Department for Education's Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance (revised guidance in force 1 September 2026), issued under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

Other relevant requirements include the Children and Social Work Act 2017; Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019; Equality Act 2010; Education Act 1996; Education Act 2002; national curriculum science programmes of study; Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026; and relevant safeguarding, SEND and information-sharing requirements.

The Trust board retains statutory accountability for academy provision, with delegated monitoring and assurance by local governing bodies as set out in the scheme of delegation. The policy will be freely available on school websites and upon request.

4. Aims

Pupils will learn to build and sustain caring, safe relationships; recognise unhealthy behaviour; understand privacy, boundaries and permission; communicate respectfully; manage physical and mental wellbeing; understand changes associated with growing up; stay safe online and offline; and identify trusted adults and sources of support.

Teaching will be factual, sensitive, inclusive, free from discrimination and appropriately sequenced for pupils' ages, development and needs. Staff will not present personal beliefs as facts or invite pupils to disclose private experiences.

5. Curriculum content and progression

The Trust teaches PSHE weekly through sequenced lessons and reinforces it through assemblies, school values, science, RE, computing, wider personal development and pastoral practice. Teaching is planned to ensure full coverage of statutory content, not simply the completion of activities.

Statutory Relationships Education covers families and people who care for pupils, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe. Statutory Health Education covers mental wellbeing, internet safety and harms, physical health and fitness, healthy eating, drugs/alcohol/tobacco-related risks as appropriate, health and prevention, basic first aid and the changing adolescent body.

Puberty and the changing adolescent body are statutory Health Education, with related science content also statutory. The Trust additionally chooses to teach developmentally appropriate factual information about how a baby is conceived and born, ordinarily in Years 5 and/or 6, after consultation with parents and with clear identification of lessons subject to withdrawal. The exact lesson content, year groups and resources will be published in the school curriculum map before delivery.

Economic wellbeing, aspirations, citizenship and character form part of the Trust's broader PSHE provision. The curriculum is revisited and progressively deepened; Appendix 1 records the current Term 1 units but does not replace the full-year statutory coverage map.

6. Teaching approach

The Trust's six-part oracy approach is Listen • Think • Respond • Explain • Respect • Reflect. Teachers explicitly teach discussion language, including "I think... because..." and "I see it differently because...".

Lessons reflect the Trust Teaching and Learning Strategy: retrieval, small steps, modelling, guided practice, high-quality questioning, checking understanding, feedback and independent application. Activities include carefully chosen stories, sorting, role-play, fictional scenarios, debate and reflection.

Teachers establish ground rules, use distancing techniques, allow pupils to pass on personal contributions, avoid promises of confidentiality and correct misconceptions without shaming pupils. Questions are answered factually and appropriately; where a question cannot safely be answered in a whole-class setting, the teacher arranges a suitable response and consults the DSL where necessary.

7. Safeguarding, online safety and harmful behaviour

PSHE supports, but never replaces, the Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Pupils are taught safe and unsafe touch, privacy, body autonomy, permission, trusted adults, reporting concerns, online risks, sharing images, grooming and appropriate help-seeking in an age-appropriate way.

The NSPCC Talk PANTS message is explicitly introduced in Year 1 and revisited annually: Privates are private; Always remember your body belongs to you; No means no; Talk about secrets that upset you; Speak up, someone can help.

Sexist language, harassment, unwanted touching and harmful sexual behaviour must never be dismissed as "banter" or "boys will be boys". Staff respond proportionately, protect all children involved, report concerns promptly to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), and record concerns in the school

safeguarding system according to policy. The DSL considers contextual risk, peer-on-peer abuse, referral thresholds and appropriate support.

Staff must not promise confidentiality. Any disclosure is handled sensitively, recorded factually and passed promptly to the DSL. Teaching avoids pressuring pupils to recount their own experiences.

8. Equality, inclusion and SEND

Teaching complies with the Equality Act 2010 and is respectful of different family structures, religions, cultures and protected characteristics. Pupils should see families and relationships represented without stigma, including care arrangements, adoption, foster care, single-parent and same-sex-parent families. Teaching must not stereotype pupils or families.

Teachers adapt through visuals, vocabulary pre-teaching, clear examples, additional processing time, scaffolding, accessible materials, partner rehearsal and alternative response modes. The SENCO supports planning for pupils with SEND, including communication, sensory or developmental needs. Adaptations preserve access to statutory content. Staff consider the circumstances of children who are looked after, young carers and pupils who may have experienced trauma.

9. Parents, consultation and transparency

The Trust consults parents when developing or materially changing its RSE policy and when deciding the content of optional primary sex education. Schools explain what is taught, when, why and with which resources, offer opportunities to ask questions and provide accessible information to parents and carers. Pupil and staff views inform curriculum review.

The policy and an up-to-date curriculum overview are made available free of charge on each school website. Parents may request to view examples of teaching materials in accordance with applicable guidance and copyright arrangements. Schools will provide reasonable opportunities for discussion before optional sex education is taught.

10. Parental right to withdraw

Parents cannot withdraw children from statutory Relationships Education, statutory Health Education or science curriculum content, including relevant puberty and reproduction content taught as science.

At primary school, a parent's request to withdraw their child from some or all optional sex education outside statutory science must be granted. Parents should submit a written request to their school headteacher, using Appendix 3 or an equivalent letter. A discussion is offered to clarify content, benefits, possible impacts and alternative arrangements; the discussion does not make the right conditional.

The school records the request and its outcome, confirms which lessons are affected, and provides appropriate, purposeful education during withdrawal. Statutory safeguarding and personal-safety education remains available to all pupils.

11. Staff, external visitors and resources

Class teachers deliver lessons and are responsible for a safe classroom climate, accurate teaching and safeguarding referrals. Subject leaders maintain progression, review resources, support staff and assess provision. External speakers enhance but do not replace teacher-led education; their content, safeguarding arrangements and materials must be checked in advance, with a school staff member present.

Resources are selected for accuracy, accessibility, age appropriateness and suitability, drawing where appropriate on the PSHE Association, NSPCC and Kent health education services. Staff undertake induction and continuing professional development.

12. Roles and accountability

Trust Board: retains overall responsibility for statutory compliance, policy approval and assurance. Local Governing Bodies: scrutinise implementation and outcomes within delegated responsibilities. CEO: ensures Trust-wide leadership and accountability. Headteachers: ensure effective delivery, parental communication, staffing, safeguarding and decisions on withdrawal.

Trust PSHE Lead: Casey Hall (caseyh@prioryfields.kent.sch.uk) coordinates Trust-wide implementation, review and training. CEO: Kelly Brown. Headteachers / operational contacts: Casey Hall (Priory Fields); Lisa Sprigmore (Vale View); Helen Thompson (St Martin's). School PSHE leads and Leaders of Learning manage planning, assessment and quality assurance. SENCOs advise on accessibility. Pupils are expected to engage respectfully.

13. Assessment, monitoring and reporting

Teachers assess prior understanding and subsequent learning using talk, scenario responses, vocabulary, exit prompts, role-play, pupil reflection and appropriate written work. Monitoring focuses on what pupils know, explain, apply and can do rather than worksheet quantity.

Subject leaders use pupil voice, planning scrutiny, learning walks, work samples, baseline/end-of-unit checks and staff feedback. Look-fors include retrieval of vocabulary, respectful discussion, age-appropriate resources, accurate understanding and pupils' ability to name safe help-seeking routes. Leaders report themes and actions to governors.

14. Complaints, review and approval

Concerns should first be discussed with the class teacher or school PSHE lead, then the headteacher. Formal complaints follow the school/Trust complaints procedure, with escalation through the Trust's governance arrangements. Safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately through safeguarding channels.

The policy is reviewed annually for statutory and curriculum changes, with a full formal review at least every three years or sooner if guidance changes. The September 2026 version is a draft pending documented parent consultation and formal Trust approval.

Appendix 1. Curriculum overview – PSHE long-term overview

Full-year PSHE long-term overview (termly enquiry questions):

<https://www.whinlessdowntrust.co.uk/page/?title=PSHE+Long+Term+Overview&pid=57>

The Trust's long-term PSHE overview is organised around the following enquiry questions across six half-terms. The published overview is available at

<https://www.whinlessdowntrust.co.uk/page/?title=PSHE+Long+Term+Overview&pid=57>.

Year	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 1	What is the same and different about us?	Who is special to us?	What helps us stay healthy?	What can we do with our money?	Who helps to keep us safe?	How can we look after each other and the world?
Year 2	What makes a good friend?	What is bullying?	What jobs do people do?	What helps us to stay safe?	What helps us grow and stay healthy?	How do we recognise our feelings?
Year 3	How can we be a good friend?	What keeps us safe?	What are families like?	What makes a community?	Why should we eat well and look after our teeth?	Why should we keep active and sleep well?
Year 4	What strengths, skills and interests do we have?	How do we treat each other with respect?	How can we manage our feelings?	How will we grow and change?	How can our choices make a difference to others and the environment?	How can we manage risk in different places?
Year 5	What makes up a person's identity?	What decisions can people make with money?	How can we help in an accident or emergency?	How can friends communicate safely?	How can drugs common to everyday life affect health?	What jobs would we like?
Year 6	How can we keep healthy as we grow?		How can the media influence people?		What will change as we become more independent? How do friendships change as we grow?	

Appendix 2. Assessment and leadership look-fors

- Retrieval: pupils remember and accurately use previously taught PSHE vocabulary.
- Understanding: pupils can explain the lesson's key question, not merely describe an activity.
- Oracy: pupils listen, reason and disagree respectfully using taught language.
- Application: pupils select safe, realistic responses to unfamiliar fictional situations.
- Safety: pupils can identify trusted adults and know how to ask for help.
- Inclusion: resources and examples are age-appropriate, accessible and non-stereotypical.

Appendix 3. Parental request for withdrawal from optional primary sex education

School: _____

Pupil name and class: _____

Parent/carer name: _____

Optional sex education lesson(s) from which withdrawal is requested (if known):

Reason / questions (optional): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

School acknowledgement date: _____

Discussion offered / held (optional): _____

Lessons excluded and alternative education arranged: _____

Headteacher confirmation: _____ Date: _____

The headteacher will grant withdrawal from optional primary sex education outside statutory science; parents do not need to provide a reason.

Appendix 4. Quality principles for effective RSE

The Trust uses the PSHE Association's principles of effective PSHE education as a quality-assurance reference. Staff should consult the current published guidance rather than relying on an unverified fixed list of "twelve principles". Effective provision is planned, developmental, inclusive, evidence-informed, interactive, safely managed, regularly assessed and responsive to pupil needs.

Appendix 5. Resources and statutory references

- DfE (effective 1 September 2026), Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>
- DfE, National curriculum in England: science programmes of study:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>
- DfE, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- PSHE Association: <https://pshe-association.org.uk/>
- NSPCC Talk PANTS: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/pants-underwear-rule/>
- Whinless Down Academy Trust PSHE curriculum and long-term overview (Trust website).

Appendix 6. Safeguarding response: staff quick reference

1. 1. Listen calmly; do not investigate or ask leading questions.
2. 2. Reassure appropriately; never promise secrecy.
3. 3. Record the child's words and relevant facts promptly in the school safeguarding system.
4. 4. Inform the DSL without delay; escalate immediately if there is an urgent risk.
5. 5. Follow the Trust safeguarding policy, including referrals and ongoing support where appropriate.

Appendix 7. One-page summary for parents and governors

- What we teach: weekly, progressive PSHE, compulsory Relationships and Health Education, statutory science, and carefully identified optional primary sex education about conception and birth.
- How we teach: discussion-rich, oracy-led, Rosenshine-informed, adaptive lessons with realistic scenarios and regular retrieval.
- How we keep children safe: explicit boundaries, help-seeking, online safety and NSPCC Talk PANTS; concerns reported to the DSL.
- Parental rights: no withdrawal from Relationships Education, Health Education or science; automatic withdrawal on request from optional primary sex education.
- Contacts: Casey Hall, Trust PSHE Lead (caseyh@prioryfields.kent.sch.uk); school headteachers named in section 12.
- Publication: school websites; review annually, with full review at least every three years.