



CHESTNUT HILL

SCHOOL

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

Chestnut Hill School

Policy owner	Head of School
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Welsh framework • Developmentally appropriate • Inclusive • Safeguarding-led

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1.0 Legal framework and status of this policy

Chestnut Hill School is an independent school in Wales. Its direct curriculum duties arise principally from the Education Act 2002 and the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. Those standards require a written curriculum policy supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, with teaching that takes account of learners' ages, aptitudes and needs and provides personal, social and health education that reflects the school's aims and ethos and encourages respect for others, with particular regard to the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.

The Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 do not require independent schools to follow Curriculum for Wales. Chestnut Hill School has nevertheless chosen to adopt the Welsh Government Curriculum for Wales Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Code as the framework for its RSE curriculum. Within Chestnut Hill School, the content and principles of the RSE Code are therefore treated as the school's core RSE entitlement for all learners.

Welsh framework adopted by the school

This policy deliberately uses Welsh terminology and practice: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), learners, additional learning needs (ALN), Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person (DDSP). English RSHE, KCSIE, DSL/DDSL and SEND terminology is not used as the governing framework for this policy.

This policy has been developed with regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- Education Act 2002.
- Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.
- Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998.
- Children Act 1989 and Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the ALN Code.
- Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 and the Welsh Government Curriculum for Wales RSE Code, as the Welsh curriculum framework adopted by the school.
- Keeping learners safe: the role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002.
- Wales Safeguarding Procedures.
- The principles of Part 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which the Independent School Standards require the school's curriculum planning to take into account.

1.1 Linked school policies

This policy should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding Policy and, where applicable, its Behaviour, Anti-bullying, Online Safety/Web Filtering and Monitoring, Child-on-child Abuse and Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Equality, ALN and Mobile and Smart Technology policies and procedures.

2.0 Policy context and rationale

Relationships and Sexuality Education is a central part of the school's work to help learners understand themselves, build safe and respectful relationships, recognise risk, make informed decisions and know how and where to seek help. RSE is closely connected to safeguarding, well-being, rights, equality and preparation for adult life.

The school recognises that learners may have diverse developmental profiles, communication needs, experiences of trauma, neurodivergence, disabilities and additional learning needs. RSE is therefore planned to be accessible, sensitive and responsive. A learner's chronological age is important, but it is not used in isolation to decide the pace, language or presentation of learning.

RSE is not confined to isolated lessons. It includes planned, explicit teaching and appropriate reinforcement through the wider curriculum and school environment. Learning may be strengthened through Health and Well-being,

Science and Technology, Humanities, digital learning, literacy and communication, assemblies, pastoral work and day-to-day routines, while the school's RSE curriculum retains clear ownership and traceability of core content.

3.0 Principles and aims

RSE at Chestnut Hill School will:

- be rights-based, inclusive, factual and developmentally appropriate;
- help learners develop healthy, safe, equitable and respectful relationships;
- develop accurate body knowledge, self-care, sexual health knowledge and the ability to access appropriate support;
- build understanding of privacy, boundaries, permission and, when developmentally appropriate, sexual consent;
- help learners recognise bullying, discrimination, abuse, coercion, exploitation and other harmful behaviour, online and offline;
- teach learners how to seek help for themselves or others and how to identify trusted adults and reliable sources of information;
- reflect diversity in identities, families, relationships, gender and sexuality, including LGBTQ+ lives, without presenting one family, body or relationship as the default;
- promote respect for people with protected characteristics and challenge discriminatory language and behaviour;
- support critical thinking about media, online relationships, body image, fabricated or altered content, self-generated imagery and other digital risks;
- prepare learners for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life;
- use balanced, evidence-informed teaching where sensitive, ethical, cultural, religious or political issues arise, while being clear about law, safeguarding and human rights;
- never require a learner to disclose personal experience, family circumstances, sexual behaviour, sexuality, gender identity or other private information as part of assessment or classroom participation.

4.0 Definitions and terminology

4.1 Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

RSE is learning about relationships, identity, bodies, sexuality, sexual health, rights, safety, respect, equality and support. It combines accurate knowledge with communication, decision-making, help-seeking and relationship skills. It is not about promoting sexual activity.

4.2 The three Welsh RSE strands

Relationships and identity: how relationships and sexuality can shape identity; healthy, safe and fulfilling relationships; diversity; communication; rights, equity and respect.

Sexual health and well-being: the human body and life cycle; puberty; reproduction; menstrual well-being; sexual and reproductive health; body image; informed choices and access to support.

Empowerment, safety and respect: rights to safety and freedom from harm and discrimination; privacy; boundaries; consent; recognising harmful behaviour; online safety; advocacy and knowing how and where to seek support.

4.3 Developmental appropriateness

Developmental appropriateness means that the school considers the individual learner's age, knowledge, maturity, additional learning needs, communication profile and anticipated physiological and emotional development. Learners of a similar chronological age may therefore require different pacing, scaffolding, examples or communication methods.

4.4 Welsh terminology

The term additional learning needs (ALN) is used throughout. Where a learner has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC plan) maintained by an English local authority, the plan will inform the learner's access arrangements, individual needs and appropriate adaptations. It does not change the Welsh RSE framework adopted and delivered by Chestnut Hill School.

5.0 Curriculum framework and progression

The school's RSE curriculum is organised as a two-year spiral programme. Core ideas are deliberately revisited and extended rather than treated as one-off topics. This supports consolidation, application, retrieval and the responsive re-teaching of safeguarding essentials whenever learner need or emerging risk requires it.

The curriculum is mapped against all three Welsh RSE Code strands and the three broad developmental phases. The broad age indications in the Code are starting points for professional consideration, not fixed gates. Learning may be introduced gradually, revisited more frequently or delayed where this is necessary to secure understanding and maintain dignity, safety and developmental appropriateness.

Progression, not simple coverage

The school will not treat RSE as a checklist of topics. Learners build from foundational knowledge and skills - such as naming feelings, privacy, permission, safe touch and trusted adults - towards more complex learning about puberty, relationships, consent, sexual health, law, media, coercion, rights and advocacy.

5.1 Phase-informed planning

- Phase 1: concrete, sensory and communication-led learning about identity, kindness, accurate body vocabulary, self-care, safety, privacy, permission and help-seeking foundations.
- Phase 2: structured explanation and application involving puberty, reproduction, relationship skills, consent foundations, online and offline safety, stereotypes, abuse awareness and trustworthy information.
- Phase 3: critical and applied learning involving romantic and sexual relationships, sexual health, sexual consent, law, rights, coercion, media, advocacy and support services.

Phase decisions are made learner by learner. ALN must never be used to infantilise content or to remove access to necessary safety learning. Equally, sensitive or explicit content must never be introduced simply because of chronological age where the learner is not developmentally ready for that learning.

6.0 Delivery of RSE

6.1 Planned and responsive teaching

RSE is delivered through planned, timetabled teaching and reinforced through relevant whole-school and curriculum opportunities. Each half-term focus is developed through a clear sequence of learning, agreed vocabulary, suitable resources, assessment opportunities, safeguarding controls and routes to support.

A shared enquiry may be used across a mixed class, but the content, vocabulary, examples, level of explanation and expected evidence will be adapted to the individual learner's developmental phase and communication needs.

6.2 Teaching approaches

Teaching may include discussion, storytelling, role-play using fictional scenarios, sorting and matching, symbols and AAC, visual prompts, practical demonstrations, body diagrams, quizzes and knowledge checks, decision-making tasks, case studies, reflection, research and creative activities. Activities will be selected to make learning accessible without reducing its dignity or safeguarding value.

6.3 Informal, semi-formal and formal routes

Learners may access the same broad RSE entitlement through different routes. For learners who require an informal or highly personalised approach, staff may use concrete experiences, objects, photographs, symbols, AAC, repeated routines and carefully structured real-life reinforcement. Semi-formal and formal routes may use increasingly explicit

explanation, comparison, scenarios, discussion, research and critical evaluation. All routes remain linked to the same Welsh RSE strands and learner-specific developmental decisions.

6.4 Sensitive teaching controls

- Establish clear ground rules before sensitive content.
- Use distancing techniques, fictional characters, public examples and controlled scenarios rather than asking learners to discuss private experiences.
- Provide a way to pass, pause or ask a question privately without penalty.
- Use anonymous question methods where helpful.
- Do not use touch-based demonstrations to teach consent, boundaries or body safety.
- Do not ask learners to show personal devices, messages, accounts, images or search histories.
- Give appropriate advance preparation where content may be emotionally or sensory demanding.
- Ensure learners know who they can speak to after the lesson and how to access help.

6.5 Accuracy and language

Staff will use medically, legally and factually accurate language. Correct anatomical terminology will be taught in a developmentally appropriate way. Staff will distinguish fact, law, evidence and opinion, and will avoid shaming, moralising or making assumptions about a learner's family, identity, body, relationships, sexual orientation, future relationships or reproductive choices.

7.0 Roles and responsibilities

7.1 Proprietor / governance

- approve and oversee this policy and assure itself that the school meets the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024;
- ensure appropriate leadership, resources and staff development are in place for safe and effective RSE;
- receive assurance that curriculum content, equality, safeguarding and quality are monitored.

7.2 Head of School

- ensure this policy is implemented consistently across the school;
- ensure RSE is appropriately resourced, timetabled and staffed;
- ensure the curriculum remains aligned to the Welsh RSE framework adopted by the school and to the needs of learners;
- ensure parent/carers communication and policy review arrangements are effective.

7.3 RSE / curriculum lead

- maintain curriculum mapping and progression across the three Welsh RSE strands and phases;
- quality-assure schemes of work, resources and external contributions;
- support staff subject knowledge, confidence and training;
- work with the DSP and DDSPs so curriculum delivery responds appropriately to contextual safeguarding themes without becoming reactive or fear-based;
- monitor teaching, learning, assessment and learner voice and identify improvements.

7.4 DSP and DDSPs

- advise on safeguarding risks, sensitive content, disclosures and contextual themes;
- support staff with safe handling of disclosures and questions;
- ensure concerns arising through RSE are managed under the Safeguarding Policy and Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

7.5 Teaching and support staff

- deliver RSE sensitively and in accordance with agreed planning and this policy;
- model respectful, inclusive language and healthy boundaries;
- adapt communication and access without diluting essential safety learning;
- monitor knowledge, understanding and usable skills;
- seek advice where they do not feel confident about content or a learner's developmental readiness;
- report safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSP or DDSP in line with school procedure.

8.0 Equality, diversity, inclusion and ALN

The school is committed to RSE that is inclusive and reflects the diversity of society. Teaching will develop awareness and understanding of different identities, views and values and of diverse relationships, gender and sexuality, including LGBTQ+ lives. Learners will be taught to respect others and to recognise and challenge discrimination, stereotypes and harmful behaviour safely.

The Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics will be considered when planning and delivering RSE. Teaching will not stereotype learners or imply that any one family structure, body, culture, faith, gender, sexuality or relationship is the default. Faith, cultural and ethical perspectives may be explored respectfully and, where relevant, learners will be helped to distinguish these perspectives from the law and from factual health or safeguarding information.

8.1 Additional learning needs

Learners with ALN are entitled to meaningful access to RSE. Staff will consider communication, cognition, sensory processing, physical access, emotional regulation, trauma, health needs and vulnerability when selecting resources and teaching approaches. Adaptation may include AAC, symbols, visual sequencing, simplified language, repetition, concrete examples, smaller-group or individual delivery, additional preparation and extra processing time.

Adaptation must preserve dignity and purpose. It must not remove essential learning about bodies, privacy, boundaries, abuse, consent foundations, online safety, sexual health or help-seeking where that learning is necessary for the learner's safety and well-being.

8.2 Learners placed by English authorities

All learners attending Chestnut Hill School follow this school policy and the Welsh RSE framework adopted by the school, regardless of their home address or placing authority. Where an English local authority maintains an EHC plan, the school will use relevant information within that plan to support accessibility and individualisation, but the learner will not be moved onto a separate English RSHE curriculum solely because they are placed from England.

9.0 Assessment, monitoring and quality assurance

9.1 Assessment

Assessment in RSE is used to identify what learners know, understand and can do, and to inform next teaching. It is not used to judge a learner's family circumstances, personal beliefs, sexuality, gender identity, private experiences or willingness to disclose personal information.

Evidence may include observation, AAC responses, sorting and matching, scenario responses, role-play, knowledge checks, explanation, decision-making tasks, supported discussion, written work, visual responses and reflection. Assessment will consider usable knowledge and skills such as recognising risk, communicating a boundary, selecting a trusted adult, identifying reliable information or explaining a safe response.

9.2 Monitoring and quality assurance

- curriculum mapping and coverage across the three RSE strands and developmental phases;
- planning and resource scrutiny, particularly for sensitive content;
- learning walks, lesson visits or appropriate sampling of teaching and learner work;
- learner voice using accessible methods;

- review of safeguarding, bullying, online safety and contextual trends that may indicate a need for responsive teaching;
- staff confidence and training needs;
- parent/carer communication and feedback where appropriate.

Monitoring will focus on quality, accessibility, safeguarding and impact rather than simply counting topics taught. Gaps, misconceptions or insecure prerequisite skills will be carried forward and revisited.

10.0 Responding to learners' questions

RSE may prompt questions that are sensitive, personal, unexpected or beyond the planned learning. Learners should be able to ask genuine questions without shame. Staff will respond calmly, factually and in a way that is appropriate to the learner's developmental level and the purpose of the lesson.

Staff may defer an answer where they need to check facts, law, safeguarding implications or suitability. They may also decline to answer questions about their own private life. In these circumstances the learner will be told why the question cannot be answered immediately and, where appropriate, when or how a safe answer will be provided.

Where a question suggests that a learner may have experienced abuse, exploitation, coercion, unsafe sexual activity, online harm or another safeguarding concern, staff will follow the Safeguarding Policy and report the concern to the DSP or DDSP without delay. RSE must never become an informal investigation of a learner's experience.

11.0 RSE and safeguarding

RSE is a protective part of the school's safeguarding culture. It provides learners with language, knowledge and practical routes for recognising harm and seeking help. At the same time, sensitive teaching may prompt disclosures or reveal previously unidentified risk. Safeguarding therefore remains integral to planning, delivery and follow-up.

11.1 Core safeguarding expectations

- Every learner should know how to identify and approach trusted adults and how to report a concern.
- Accurate body terminology, body privacy, personal boundaries and communication of discomfort should be revisited developmentally.
- Permission, agreement, refusal, changing one's mind and respect for boundaries should be reinforced before and alongside later sexual-consent learning.
- Learners should revisit how to recognise harmful, abusive, bullying or discriminatory behaviour and how to respond safely.
- Online privacy, safe sharing, online friendships, fabricated or altered content, upsetting material and reporting routes should be reviewed regularly.
- Teachers must use distancing techniques and must not force personal disclosure.

11.2 Disclosures

If a learner makes a disclosure or gives information that raises a safeguarding concern, staff will listen, remain calm, take the learner seriously, avoid leading questions, explain that the information may need to be shared to keep them safe, and report the concern immediately in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy. Staff must not promise confidentiality.

11.3 Current and emerging risks

The RSE lead and safeguarding team may agree responsive teaching where school data, learner voice or external safeguarding intelligence identifies an emerging need. This may include online coercion, self-generated imagery, sextortion, AI-generated or altered sexualised content, harmful online communities, relationship abuse, exploitation or discriminatory behaviour. Responsive teaching will remain developmentally appropriate and will not expose learners to unnecessary or graphic detail.

12.0 Working with parents and carers

The school recognises parents and carers as important partners in RSE. We aim to be clear about what is taught, why it is taught and how content is made developmentally appropriate. The policy and curriculum overview will be available to parents and carers, and reasonable requests to discuss content, resources or individual access arrangements will be welcomed.

Parents and carers may raise concerns about timing, language, resources, faith or cultural context, emotional readiness, ALN or other individual circumstances. The school will listen carefully and may adjust preparation, pacing, group size, communication method, resources or support where this improves access and remains consistent with the learner's safety, rights and curriculum entitlement.

12.1 Participation and withdrawal

Under Curriculum for Wales, RSE is designed as a mandatory entitlement with no parental right of withdrawal for learners to whom that statutory curriculum applies. Chestnut Hill School is an independent school and is not legally required to follow Curriculum for Wales; however, the school has formally adopted the Welsh RSE Code and the Welsh principle of universal access to developmentally appropriate RSE as its own curriculum approach.

Accordingly, Chestnut Hill School does not operate a routine parental opt-out from its core RSE curriculum. All learners are expected to participate in RSE that has been judged developmentally appropriate for them. The school will work constructively with parents and carers to address concerns and individual needs, but essential safeguarding, rights, relationship, safety and health learning will not be omitted simply because a learner is placed by an English authority or because the equivalent English framework would use different terminology or curriculum arrangements.

What parents and carers can expect

The school will be transparent about planned content; provide access to the policy and curriculum overview; consider individual developmental needs and reasonable adjustments; and offer discussion where a family has concerns. Any adaptation will preserve the learner's safety and core curriculum entitlement.

13.0 External visitors and resources

External visitors may contribute specialist knowledge, lived experience or services where this adds clear educational value. The class teacher or school remains responsible for the lesson, safeguarding and curriculum appropriateness. A visitor does not replace the school's professional responsibility for RSE.

Before use, external contributors and resources will be checked for:

- clear learning purpose and alignment with this policy and the school's curriculum;
- factual and legal accuracy;
- developmental appropriateness and accessibility;
- inclusive and non-stigmatising representation;
- appropriate safeguarding language and disclosure routes;
- absence of unnecessary graphic, sensational or promotional content;
- suitability for the specific learner group, including ALN, communication and sensory needs.

Staff will preview sensitive videos, websites, diagrams, case studies and digital resources before they are used with learners. Learners will not be directed to search the open internet for sensitive sexual or safeguarding material as an unsupervised learning activity.

14.0 Confidentiality, information sharing and records

RSE classrooms should feel safe and respectful, but they are not confidential spaces in the same way as a therapeutic or medical service. Staff will explain, in language learners can understand, that they will respect privacy but must share information where they are concerned about someone's safety or welfare.

Safeguarding information will be recorded and shared in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy, data protection law and Wales Safeguarding Procedures. Curriculum assessment records should record learning, progress and support needs; they should not unnecessarily record intimate personal information, disclosures or family details within ordinary RSE work.

15.0 Policy review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where there is a significant change to Welsh legislation or guidance, the school's RSE curriculum, safeguarding risks, learner needs or organisational arrangements. The review will consider curriculum quality, developmental appropriateness, safeguarding, equality, learner voice, parent/carers communication and staff training.

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that the policy remains current and that substantive amendments are approved through the school's governance/proprietor arrangements.

Appendix 1 - Two-year RSE curriculum overview

The school's RSE curriculum is organised as a two-year spiral. The enquiry titles below provide the strategic curriculum sequence; detailed lesson content is selected and adapted according to each learner's developmental appropriateness and the Welsh RSE phase being taught.

Half term	Cycle A	Cycle B
Autumn 1	Who am I and where do I belong?	How do families, friendships and relationships shape our lives?
Autumn 2	What makes relationships kind, fair and respectful?	What happens as bodies develop, and how can we care for our health and well-being?
Spring 1	How do bodies, feelings and needs change as we grow?	How can we recognise healthy, unhealthy and harmful relationships?
Spring 2	How do privacy, boundaries and permission help keep us safe?	How do consent, sexual health and informed choices support well-being?
Summer 1	How can we recognise harm, challenge unfairness and speak up?	How do media and technology influence bodies, relationships and safety?
Summer 2	How do we stay safe and seek help online and offline?	How do rights, law and support help us protect ourselves and others?

Curriculum sequencing principles

- Cycle A establishes core foundations in identity, respectful relationships, body knowledge, self-care, boundaries, fairness, trusted adults and practical online/offline safety.
- Cycle B revisits and extends the same statutory strands through relationship change, puberty and reproduction, healthy and harmful relationships, consent, sexual health, media influence, law, rights and advocacy.
- Annual safeguarding essentials are revisited whenever current context, learner need or emerging risk requires it; they are not treated as one-off coverage.
- A mixed class may share the same enquiry while receiving different vocabulary, examples, depth and evidence expectations according to individual developmental phase.

Appendix 2 - Welsh RSE phases and delivery expectations

Welsh phase	Broad age indication	Typical emphasis	Delivery expectations at Chestnut Hill
Phase 1	From age 3	Identity, kindness, body vocabulary, self-care, safety, privacy, permission and help-seeking foundations.	Concrete, sensory and communication-led learning. Use objects, photographs, symbols, AAC, repetition and familiar scenarios where helpful.
Phase 2	From age 7	Puberty, reproduction, relationship skills, consent foundations, online/offline safety, stereotypes, abuse awareness and trustworthy information.	Structured explanation and application. Use supported discussion, scenarios, role-play, visuals, sequencing and explicit safety language.
Phase 3	From age 11	Romantic and sexual relationships, sexual health, sexual consent, law, rights, coercion, media, advocacy and support services.	Critical and applied learning. Use factually accurate case studies, decision-making, comparison, discussion, reliable sources and clear signposting.

The ages shown above are broad indications from the Welsh RSE Code. They do not replace professional judgement. A learner may be ready for some learning within a phase before other learning in the same phase. Decisions should consider age, knowledge, maturity, ALN, communication, anticipated physiological and emotional development, dignity and current safeguarding need.

Appendix 3 - Annual safeguarding essentials for RSE

Essential	Annual and responsive expectation
Trusted adults and help-seeking	Every learner should know how to identify and approach trusted adults, report concerns and access school or specialist support.
Body language, privacy and boundaries	Accurate terminology, body privacy, personal boundaries and communication of discomfort are revisited in developmentally appropriate ways.
Permission and consent foundations	Permission, agreement, refusal, changing one's mind and respect for boundaries are reinforced before and alongside later sexual-consent learning.
Harm, bullying and discrimination	Learners revisit how to recognise harmful, abusive, bullying or discriminatory behaviour and how to respond safely.
Online safety and reporting	Privacy, safe sharing, online friendships, fabricated/altered content, upsetting material and current reporting routes are reviewed regularly.
Safe classroom practice	Use distancing techniques, fictional or public examples, anonymous questions and no forced personal disclosure; respond to concerns through safeguarding procedures.

Appendix 4 - Key legal and guidance references

Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 -

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2024/27/contents/made>

Welsh Government: Independent schools registration and operational guidance -

<https://www.gov.wales/independent-schools-registration-and-operational-guidance-html>

Welsh Government: Curriculum for Wales - Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Code -

<https://www.gov.wales/curriculum-wales-relationships-and-sexuality-education-rse-code>

Welsh Government: Keeping learners safe - <https://www.gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe>

Wales Safeguarding Procedures - <https://safeguarding.wales/>

Equality Act 2010 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 -

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2018/2/contents>

Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asc/2021/4/contents>