



Durham  
Cathedral  
Schools  
Foundation

## Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

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## 1. Policy Aims

- 1.1 This is the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy of Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation (the Foundation).
- 1.2 The aims of Relationships and Sex Education [RSE] at the Foundation are:
- **To promote and protect the wellbeing of all pupils;**
  - to create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships;
  - to provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place;
  - to prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene;
  - to help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy;
  - to create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships;
  - to teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- 1.3 The Foundation commits to observing the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and does not discriminate on any grounds.

## 2. Statutory Requirements

- 2.1 As an independent secondary school we must provide relationships education to all primary school pupils and relationships and sex education (RSE) to all secondary school pupils, as per sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- 2.3 In line with the Foundation's statutory obligations, Relationships and Sex Education is provided at the Foundation as follows:
- All primary-aged pupils receive relationships education;
  - All secondary-aged pupils receive relationships and sex education.

## 3. Policy Development

- 3.1 This RSE Policy is maintained in line with the Foundation's obligations under the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance (July 2025). As such, the Foundation routinely consults with pupils, parents, and staff in developing and reviewing this Policy, a copy of which is published on the Foundation website.
- 3.2 The consultation and Policy development process involved the following steps:
- **Review:** a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance.
  - **Staff consultation:** all Foundation staff were given the opportunity to look at the Policy and make recommendations.

- **Parent/carer consultation:** parents/carers were invited to attend a meeting about the Policy. Parent/carer consultation meetings are held annually.
  - **Pupil consultation:** we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE.
  - **Ratification:** once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified.
- 3.3 The religious background of all pupils is considered when teaching RSE so that all topics are appropriately handled while complying with the provision of the Equality Act [2010] under which religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics. Teaching reflects on faith teachings about certain topics as well as how faith institutions may support pupils in matters of relationships and sex. Teaching will always reflect the law, including the Equality Act [2010] as it applies to relationships so that young people understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the implications of decisions they make.
- 3.4 Where appropriate, adjustments are made for those with SEND and/or EAL, and teachers will take account of pupils' individual needs when planning and delivering provision.
- 3.5 Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE; details of how this can be requested are contained in Section 9 of this Policy.
- 3.6 The content of the RSE curriculum follows statutory guidance and reflects what pupils should know by the end of primary and secondary education respectively (see Appendices 2 and 3).
- 3.7 All RSE teaching is delivered in a non-judgmental, factual way, allowing pupils the opportunity to ask questions [publicly or anonymously].
- 3.8 Programmes of study and schemes of work seek to address issues proactively in a timely way in line with current evidence on children's physical, emotional, and sexual development, reflecting children's needs.

#### **4. Definition**

- 4.1 RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.
- 4.2 RSE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values.
- 4.3 RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.
- 4.4 Everyone has relationships with others, and most pupils will develop sexual relationships at some point in their lives. Relationships education will equip pupils with the knowledge and

skills they need to act with kindness and respect in all their relationships as they grow into adulthood, to enjoy their relationships, and to keep themselves and others safe.

- 4.5 Relationships education will focus on how to form and sustain positive relationships but will also help children identify risks and harms. Relationships education may therefore include topics related to preventing sexual abuse, for example, or avoiding sharing inappropriate material online. This can be done without describing the detail of any sexual activity involved. Similarly, good safeguarding practice requires young people to understand the correct terms for different parts of the body and to be able to confidently use these terms. This can be provided as part of health education at Chorister School, without describing any detail of sexual activity.

## **5. Curriculum**

- 5.1 The RSE curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1, but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary. Flexibility within the curriculum is important as it allows the Foundation to respond to current global issues, local public health issues, and community issues to better meet the needs of our pupils.
- 5.2 We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents/carers, pupils and staff, and taking into account the age, developmental stage, needs and feelings of our pupils.
- 5.3 If Chorister School pupils ask questions about topics in sex education that the School does not cover, or if Durham School pupils ask questions that relate to sex education from which the pupil has been withdrawn, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so that pupils are fully informed and don't seek answers from inappropriate sources of information, including online. This may include asking a pupil to speak to their parents or a trusted adult, or signposting to support services where needed.
- 5.4 We will share all curriculum materials with parents/carers upon request. If you would like to see curriculum materials, please contact Mrs Joss Balfour (j.balfour@dcsf.org.uk) for the Chorister School and Mrs Nicola Thompson (n.thompson@dcsf.org.uk) for Durham School.
- 5.5 At Chorister School, sex education will be taught in Years 5 and/or 6 in line with science content about the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals. Coverage of human reproduction will be in line with the factual description of conception in the science curriculum.

## **6. Delivery of RSE**

- 6.1 RSE is taught within the Life and Wellbeing Education (LWE) curriculum. Pupils will cover RSE topics across their time at the Foundation, which have been carefully

mapped to be age appropriate and relevant to the social context of the time. At Chorister School, pupils will have one timetabled LWE lesson per week (50 minutes); at Durham School, pupils will have one timetabled LWE lesson per fortnight (55 minutes) which will be supplemented by Tutor periods.

- 6.2 Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in Religious Studies. Aspects of relationships education are also taught across the wider curriculum.
- 6.3 At Chorister School, relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:
- Families and people who care for me;
  - Caring friendships;
  - Respectful, kind relationships;
  - Online safety and awareness;
  - Being safe.
- 6.4 At Durham School, RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:
- Families;
  - Respectful relationships;
  - Online safety and awareness;
  - Being safe;
  - Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health.
- 6.5 All sex education lessons are delivered in timetabled LWE lessons by staff who have undertaken training to do so. When relevant, elements of RSE may be delivered by our School Nurses.
- 6.6 At both Chorister School and Durham School, content is taught within the context of family life, taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, same-sex parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents/carers, amongst other structures), along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, looked-after children or young carers).
- 6.7 At Durham School, there will be an equal opportunity for pupils to explore the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships, and lessons will cover all the facts about sexual health, including STIs, in a way that is relevant for all pupils, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or gender questioning.

- 6.8 At Durham School, pupils will also be taught the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment. This will recognise that people have legal rights by virtue of their biological sex which are different from the rights of those of the opposite sex with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. Pupils will also be taught to recognise that people with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, as with the other protected characteristics, have protection from discrimination and should be treated with respect and dignity. In teaching this, staff will be mindful that beyond the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment there is significant debate, and they will be careful not to endorse any particular view or teach it as fact.
- 6.9 We will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, hate crime, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs. Pupils are made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, for example, marriage, consent, abortion, extremism/radicalisation, female genital mutilation etc.
- 6.10 We ensure all pupils feel valued and included, regardless of their background, identity and experience, and are sensitive to the needs of all, including different ethnic groups. We use inclusive language and approaches to teaching that reflect the diversity of the Foundation community. Topics are taught in a manner which, during lessons, makes pupils feel safe and supported, and able to engage with the key messages.
- 6.11 Throughout all RSE teaching, as well as the Foundation's wider curriculum, an inclusive approach is adopted at all times to reflect the Foundation's aims and ethos which encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act [2010].
- 6.12 The Foundation is committed to addressing contemporary issues that may affect pupils' wellbeing, including sexism, misogyny, homophobia and harmful gender stereotypes. Through its LWE provision and wider pastoral systems, DCSF actively promotes a culture of moral integrity, responsibility and kindness, where inappropriate behaviour is challenged, and pupils are supported to develop understanding, empathy and respectful attitudes.
- 6.12 RSE teaching will be delivered in an environment that is appropriate for pupils, for example in:
- a whole-class setting;
  - gender groups within a year group;
  - small groups or targeted sessions;
  - 1-to-1 discussions;
  - digital formats.
- 6.13 Where appropriate, careful consideration is given to the level of differentiation needed to ensure that all pupils receive appropriate relationships and sex education,

taking specialist advice where necessary. For pupils with SEND and/or EAL, we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of our pupils, taking specialist advice where necessary.

## **7. Use of External Resources and Organisations**

7.1 DCSF holds annual membership of, and follows the PSHE Association programme of work. PSHE Association accredited resources are used as a first preference when teaching RSE.

7.2 In reviewing external resources for use within RSE, we will consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance [2025];
- will support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings;
- are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our pupils;
- are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics;
- fit into our curriculum plan; are from credible sources;
- are compatible with effective teaching approaches;
- are sensitive to pupils' experiences and won't provoke distress.

The Foundation commits to avoiding working with organisations which do not allow us to share their resources with parents/carers.

7.3 We will make sure that an agency and any materials used are appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality. The Foundation remains responsible for what is said to pupils. This includes making sure that any speakers, tools and resources used do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

7.4 The Foundation will make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use:

- are age-appropriate;
- are in line with pupils' developmental stage;
- comply with:
  - this Policy;
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education [2025]
  - the Teachers' Standards;
  - the Equality Act 2010;

- the Human Rights Act 1998;
- the Education Act 1996.

7.5 The Foundation will only work with external agencies where we have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses.

7.6 The Foundation will make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum.

7.7 The Foundation will ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use and may look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with to confirm:

- what they're going to say;
- their position on the issues to be discussed;
- the named individuals who will be there, and that they will follow our usual safeguarding procedures

The Foundation will also:

- conduct a basic online search for the speaker and address anything that may be of concern to us, or to parents and carers;
- check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session;
- remind teachers that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session;
- make sure that a teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers.

7.8 We will not under any circumstances:

- work with external agencies which take or promote extreme political positions;
- use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme.

## **8. Roles and responsibilities**

### **8.1 Governors**

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, governors will make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes;
- teaching is accessible to all pupils with SEND;
- curriculum content and teaching materials are aligned with statutory guidance; and
- clear information is provided for parents on the subject content, teaching materials and external providers, and on the right to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education.

## **8.2 The Heads of LWE at Durham School and Chorister School**

The Heads of LWE at Durham School and Chorister School are responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the Foundation, for sharing resources and materials with parents/carers, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from [non-statutory] components of RSE (see section 9). They will also create the schemes of work for their respective year groups.

### **8.3 Staff**

8.3.1 Staff are responsible for:

- delivering RSE in a sensitive way;
- modelling positive attitudes to RSE;
- monitoring progress;
- responding to the needs of individual pupils;
- responding appropriately to pupils whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the [non-statutory] components of RSE.

8.3.2 Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Principal.

### **8.4 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, to treat others with respect and sensitivity as outlined in our MARK values and the fundamental British values.

## **9 Parents'/carers' right to withdraw**

9.1 Parents/carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) at the pupil's school. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record.

9.2 Before granting any request for withdrawal of a child from sex education, the respective school's Head of LWE will discuss the request with parents, and the child if appropriate, to understand the request and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. This is likely to include discussing the benefits of sex education (if appropriate given the pupil's age), and any detrimental effects of withdrawal, including social and emotional impacts on the child, and the likelihood that the child will hear their peers' version of what was said in class, which may not be accurate.

9.3 For pupils at the Chorister School, if any sex education is provided, a parental request to withdraw their child from this will be automatically granted, other than for content that is

taught as part of the science curriculum. For Durham School pupils, a parental request to withdraw their child from sex education may be refused in exceptional circumstances, for example because of safeguarding concerns or a pupil's specific vulnerability.

- 9.4 From three terms before the pupil turns 16, a pupil can choose to opt back into sex education even if their parent has requested withdrawal. For example, if a pupil turns 16 during the autumn term, the pupil can opt back into sex education at any time after the start of the previous autumn term. The Head of LWE at Durham School will ensure that pupils know they have this option.
- 9.5 If a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, they will receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.
- 9.6 Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from relationships and health education, nor can they be withdrawn from topics taught as part of the science curriculum, including science topics related to puberty or sexual reproduction.

## **10. Training**

- 10.1 Staff who teach RSE are trained in the delivery of RSE as part of their professional development.
- 10.2 Visitors from outside the school and other professionals, such as School Nurses or sexual health professionals, will provide support and training to staff teaching RSE as well as running some sessions.

## **11 Monitoring Arrangements**

- 11.1 The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Heads of LWE through work scrutiny, lesson observation, learning walks, and pupil surveys. Internal and external CPD opportunities around the delivery of RSE are offered to staff.
- 11.2 Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.
- 11.3 Parents/carers and pupils are encouraged to give feedback about the LWE and RSE programme which will be used to inform our monitoring and review process.

## **12 Oversight**

- 12.1 This Policy is overseen by the Education Committee of the Governing Body. It will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1 - Roadmap to Statutory RSE

# Roadmap to statutory RSE

These 10 steps provide a guide to support school leaders in preparing to provide high quality RSE as an identifiable part of PSHE education. These steps are based on established good practice and evidence. The law requires that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is to be taught in all secondary schools in England, and that Relationships Education is to be taught in all primary schools in England. Health Education will also be mandatory in all Government funded schools, which includes content on puberty. Government Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education guidance and regulations give further detail about the requirements. Schools that are ready to implement the updated guidance from September 2019 are encouraged to do so - September 2020 is proposed as the start date for mandatory provision.



## Appendix 2 – Relationships education: content to be covered by the end of Year 6

### **Families and people who care for me**

Curriculum content:

1. That families are important for children growing up safe and happy because they can provide love, security and stability.
2. The characteristics of safe and happy family life, such as commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives.
3. That the families of other children, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.
4. That stable, caring relationships are at the heart of safe and happy families and are important for children's security as they grow up.
5. That marriage and civil partnerships represent a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.
6. How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.

### **Caring friendships**

Curriculum content:

1. How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.
2. That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. Pupils should learn skills for developing caring, kind friendships.
3. That not every child will have the friends they would like at all times, that most people feel lonely sometimes, and that there is no shame in feeling lonely or talking about it.
4. The characteristics of friendships that lead to happiness and security, including mutual respect, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences, and support with problems and difficulties.
5. That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened.
6. How to manage conflict, and that resorting to violence is never right.
7. How to recognise when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, and how to get support when needed.

### **Respectful, kind relationships**

Curriculum content:

1. How to pay attention to the needs and preferences of others, including in families and friendships. Pupils should be encouraged to discuss how we balance the needs and wishes of different people in relationships and why this can be complicated.
2. The importance of setting and respecting healthy boundaries in relationships with friends, family, peers and adults.
3. How to communicate effectively and manage conflict with kindness and respect; how to be assertive and express needs and boundaries; how to manage feelings, including disappointment and frustration.
4. Pupils should have opportunities to discuss the difference between being assertive and being controlling, and conversely the difference between being kind to other people and neglecting your own needs.
5. That they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and the importance of respecting others, including those who are different (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices, or have different preferences or beliefs.
6. Practical steps they can take and skills they can develop in a range of different contexts to improve or support their relationships.
7. The conventions of courtesy and manners.
8. The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. Pupils should have opportunities to think about how they foster their own self-esteem and build a strong sense of their own identity, including through developing skills and interests.
9. The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult), and how to get help.
10. What a stereotype is, how stereotypes can be unfair, negative, destructive or lead to bullying and how to challenge a stereotype.
11. How to seek help when needed, including when they are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.

### **Online safety and awareness**

Curriculum content:

1. That people should be respectful in online interactions, and that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including where people are anonymous. For example, the importance of avoiding putting pressure on others to share information and images online, and strategies for resisting peer pressure.
2. How to critically evaluate their online relationships and sources of information, including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. For example, that people sometimes behave differently online, including pretending to be someone else, or pretending to be a child, and that this can lead to dangerous situations. How to recognise harmful content or harmful contact, and how to report this.
3. That there is a minimum age for joining social media sites (currently 13), which protects children from inappropriate content or unsafe contact with older social media users, who may be strangers, including other children and adults.
4. The importance of exercising caution about sharing any information about themselves online. Understanding the importance of privacy and location settings to protect information online.
5. Online risks, including that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once a picture or words has been circulated there is no way of deleting it everywhere and no control over where it ends up.
6. That the internet contains a lot of content that can be inappropriate and upsetting for children, and where to go for advice and support when they feel worried or concerned about something they have seen or engaged with online.

### **Being Safe**

Curriculum content:

1. What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including online). This can include learning about boundaries in play and in negotiations about space, toys, books, resources etc.
2. The concept of privacy and its implications for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.
3. That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe contact, including physical contact.
4. How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online), including those they do and do not know.
5. How to recognise when a relationship is harmful or dangerous, including skills for recognising who to trust and who not to trust.
6. How to report abuse, concerns about something seen online or experienced in real life, or feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
7. How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard. Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

**Appendix 3 – Secondary relationships and sex education content: content in addition to that in Appendix 2 which is to be covered by the end of Year 11**

**Families**

Curriculum content:

1. That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
2. How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children.
3. Why marriage or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples. The legal status of marriage and civil partnership, including that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections that are not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have, for example, undergone a non-legally binding religious ceremony.
4. That 'common-law marriage' is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children.
5. That forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 are illegal.<sup>8</sup>
6. How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships.
7. The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the importance of the early years of a child's life for brain development.
8. How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed, including when pupils are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.

<sup>8</sup> Age of Marriage Act 2023

### **Respectful relationships**

Curriculum content:

1. The characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, pupils should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, generosity, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships.
2. How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers. Pupils should understand the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and equal.
3. The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others. This includes developing one's own interests, hobbies, friendship groups, and skills. Pupils should understand what it means to be treated with respect by others.
4. What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs.
5. The practical steps pupils can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships. This includes skills for communicating respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict.
6. The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.
7. Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration.
8. The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Pupils should understand that just because someone says yes to doing something, that doesn't automatically make it ethically ok.
9. How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). Pupils should be equipped to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice.
10. How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships. For example, how people who are disempowered can feel they are not entitled to be treated with respect by others or how those who enjoy an unequal amount of power might, with or without realising it, impose their preferences on others.
11. How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviours and by disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing some people with a sense of sexual entitlement to the bodies of others.
12. Pupils should have an opportunity to discuss how some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called "involuntary celibates" (incels) or online influencers.

### **Online safety and awareness**

Curriculum content:

1. Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.
2. Online risks, including the importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect information online. Pupils should also understand the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues.
3. The characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and / or may post things which aren't real / have been created with AI. That social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online.
4. Not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal material which is sent to them. Pupils should understand that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has happened there is no way of controlling where it ends up. Pupils should understand the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images.
5. That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI generated imagery. Pupils should understand the potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. Pupils should know how to seek support and should understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either at school or with the police, if an image of themselves has been shared. Pupils should also understand that sharing indecent images of people over 18 without consent is a crime.
6. What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including personal information, images or videos, and how to manage issues online.<sup>9</sup>
7. About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them.
8. That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons. Pupils should be taught where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Pupils should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong.
9. That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice.
10. How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns.

<sup>9</sup> For example, see Report Remove

11. That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours and can negatively affect how people behave towards sexual partners. This can affect pupils who see pornographic content accidentally as well as those who see it deliberately. Pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it.
12. How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.
13. That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (e.g. to enable targeted advertising).
14. That criminals can operate online scams, for example using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion.
15. That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and that these can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice. It is important to be able to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how they might pose a risk.

## Being Safe

Curriculum content:

1. How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships (in all contexts, including online) and early sexual relationships that might involve kissing or touching. That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent.
2. That there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from peers or others, including sexual pressure, and how to avoid putting pressure on others.
3. How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe (and recognise this in the relationships of others); how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.
4. How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. Pupils should learn ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. Pupils should understand that there are strategies they can use to increase their safety, and that this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour. Pupils might reflect on the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions.
5. What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it.
6. That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language / attention / touching, taking and/or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting.
7. The concepts and laws relating to sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault.
8. The concepts and laws relating to harmful sexual behaviour, which includes all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people but also includes other forms of concerning behaviour like using age-inappropriate sexual language.
9. The concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour.<sup>10</sup>
10. That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed.
11. The concepts and laws relating to harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation.
12. The concepts and laws relating to forced marriage.
13. The physical and emotional damage which can be caused by female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law around these areas. This should include that it is a criminal offence for anyone to perform or

<sup>10</sup> The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognised children who see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse, and are related to either the victim of the abusive behaviour, or the perpetrator, as victims of domestic abuse in their own right (part 1, section 3). The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory guidance is designed to support statutory and non-statutory bodies working with victims of domestic abuse, including children.

assist in the performance of FGM, virginity testing or hymenoplasty, in the UK or abroad, or to fail to protect a person under 16 for whom they are responsible.

14. That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury. That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone's neck or covering someone's mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death.
15. That pornography presents some activities as normal which many people do not and will never engage in, some of which can be emotionally and/or physically harmful.
16. How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced from others, including information on where to report abuse, and where to seek medical attention when required, for example after an assault.

### **Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health**

Curriculum content:

1. That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive.
2. The law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex.
3. Sexual consent and their capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given, as well as the considerations that people might take into account prior to sexual activity, e.g. the law, faith and family values. That kindness and care for others require more than just consent.
4. That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.
5. That some sexual behaviours can be harmful.
6. The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, and signposting towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decision-making.
7. That there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Pupils should be given medically and legally accurate and impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help.
8. How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, are transmitted. How risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use). The use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and how and where to access them. The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma
9. The prevalence of STIs, the short and long term impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
10. How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour.
11. How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms.
12. How to counter misinformation, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further advice, and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.