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Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

Approved By: Executive Leadership Team

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Think Differently Education Trust

1. Introduction

This Policy has been written to support the Trust's Vision, Mission and Core Values and to foster an environment that values inclusion, safety, ethical leadership and high standards of practice. All employees and those working on behalf of the Trust are expected to **THINK DIFFERENTLY** to inspire young people to overcome barriers and achieve their potential.

The Trust is committed to the principles of **ethical leadership**, including respect for the rights of children and young people as set out in the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**.

This policy reflects the **revised statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) guidance (DfE, 2025)**, which will become mandatory from **September 2026**, and ensures that the Trust is proactively preparing for full compliance.

Throughout this policy, the term Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is used to describe the statutory curriculum covering relationships education, sex education and health education. Where the term RSE is used, it refers specifically to the relationships and sex education elements of RSHE.

JBA Core Values	How this policy addresses these values
THRIVE – We create a positive environment where we thrive and succeed	Promotes safe, supportive learning environments where pupils develop confidence, wellbeing and healthy relationships.
HIGH ASPIRATIONS – We have high aspirations for ourselves and others	Equips pupils with knowledge and skills to make informed decisions and prepare for adulthood.
INCLUSION – We are inclusive in all we do and celebrate our differences	Ensures all content is adapted for SEND learners and reflects diverse identities, families and experiences.
NURTURE – We educate our young people and staff to nurture their emotional health and wellbeing	Supports emotional literacy, mental health, and trauma-informed approaches to sensitive topics.
KEEP SAFE – We ensure that keeping safe and the safety of others is paramount	Places safeguarding at the heart of RSHE, including online, relational and personal safety.

2. Links to Other Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (KCSIE)
- Personal Development & Wellbeing Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- SEND Policy
- Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure a **consistent, high-quality approach to RSHE** across all settings
- Deliver RSHE that is **safe, inclusive and accessible for pupils with SEND**
- Reflect **latest statutory guidance (DfE 2026)** and safeguarding priorities
- Support pupils to:
  - Build **healthy, respectful relationships**
  - Understand **consent, boundaries and personal safety**
  - Navigate **online risks and digital influences**
  - Develop **emotional wellbeing and resilience**
- Provide clarity for staff, parents and stakeholders regarding:
  - Curriculum content
  - Teaching approaches
  - Safeguarding responsibilities

This policy demonstrates the Trust's commitment to safeguarding, inclusion, preparation for adult life, high standards, compliance with statutory requirements and continuous improvement.

4. Scope and Aims

This policy applies to:

- All Trust staff, including teachers, support staff, leaders and volunteers
- External agencies delivering RSHE content
- All pupils across AP, hospital and community settings

The aims of RSHE within the Trust are to:

- Provide **developmentally appropriate RSHE**, adapted for pupils' cognitive, emotional and social needs
- Support pupils to **recognise and manage risk**, including:
  - Relationships
  - Online environments
  - Exploitation and abuse
- Promote **equality, respect and inclusion**, including awareness of protected characteristics
- Develop **communication skills, self-advocacy and independence**
- Prepare pupils for **adulthood, employment and independent living**

5. Legal and Regulatory Framework

All pupils are entitled to a planned, sequenced and accessible RSHE curriculum that reflects statutory requirements, safeguarding priorities and the developmental needs of pupils across the Trust's AP, hospital and community settings. Curriculum planning will identify what is taught, when it is taught, how it is adapted and how leaders know that pupils have understood key knowledge and safety messages.

This policy is informed by:

- DfE **Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education statutory guidance** (issued 2025, in force from September 2026)
- Education Act 2002
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice

6. Glossary of Terms

Term	Description

RSE (Relationships and Sex Education)	The relationships and sex education element within RSHE. In secondary settings, this includes relationships education and sex education, while health education is addressed through the wider RSHE curriculum.
Relationships education	Relationships education should 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. Relationships education will focus on how to form and sustain positive relationships but will also help children identify risks and harms.
Sex education	Sex education is the curriculum that provides pupils with age-appropriate, factual knowledge and understanding about human sexuality, intimate relationships and sexual health.
RSHE	Relationships, Sex and Health Education – the combined statutory curriculum covering relationships, sex and physical/mental health education.
SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)	Pupils who require additional support due to learning difficulties, communication needs, medical needs or disabilities. RSHE must be adapted to meet these needs.
Safeguarding	The responsibility to protect pupils from harm, abuse, exploitation, neglect or risk. RSHE is a key safeguarding tool.
Consent	Giving permission freely. In RSHE, this means understanding that all people have the right to say yes or no to touch, relationships and personal interactions.
Sexual Ethics	Understanding how to behave responsibly, respectfully and safely in relationships, beyond just "consent" (e.g. kindness, respect, responsibility).
Healthy Relationships	Relationships that are respectful, safe, equal and supportive.
Unhealthy / Abusive Relationships	Relationships involving control, coercion, pressure, manipulation or harm (emotional, physical or sexual).
Coercion	Pressuring or forcing someone into doing something they do not want to do.
Exploitation	Taking advantage of someone for personal gain (e.g. sexual, financial, criminal exploitation).
Sexual Harassment	Unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature (e.g. comments, touching, online messages).
VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls)	A term used nationally to describe forms of violence disproportionately affecting women and girls, including harassment, abuse and exploitation.
Misogyny	Negative or harmful attitudes towards women and girls. This may be seen in language, behaviour or online content.
Online Safety	Teaching pupils how to stay safe in digital spaces, including understanding risks such as scams, harmful content, exploitation and data privacy.
Digital Exploitation	Harm that occurs online, including grooming, sextortion, scams or manipulation through social media or gaming.
Deepfakes / AI Content	Images, videos or voices created or manipulated using artificial intelligence that may be misleading or harmful.
Personal Safety	Understanding how to recognise and manage risk in everyday situations (e.g. roads, public spaces, online environments).
Boundaries	Rules about personal space, behaviour and relationships. Pupils need explicit teaching about what is and is not appropriate.
Puberty	The physical and emotional changes that occur as a child grows into an adult. Teaching must be adapted for SEND learners.
Mental Wellbeing	How pupils think and feel, including emotional regulation, resilience, and coping strategies.

Grief and Loss	Understanding that people experience loss (e.g. death, separation) and may feel different emotions.
Suicide Prevention	Age-appropriate education that helps pupils understand mental health, seek help and support others safely.
Protected Characteristics	Characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010 (e.g. age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, religion).
Inclusive Practice	Ensuring all pupils can access learning regardless of ability, background or need. For RSHE this includes adapting content for SEND.
Differentiation	Adapting teaching methods, language and resources so all pupils can understand and engage.
Social Stories	Structured visual or written supports used to help pupils (especially those with SEND) understand social situations and expectations.
Right to Withdraw	Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child from sex education (not relationships or health education) until three terms before their 16th birthday.
Developmentally Appropriate	Teaching that matches a pupil's level of understanding, maturity and additional needs, not just their age.
Trauma-Informed Practice	Teaching approach recognising that some pupils may have experienced trauma and may need sensitive, predictable support.
DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead)	The senior member of staff responsible for safeguarding concerns and referrals.
Disclosure	When a pupil shares information about harm, abuse or risk. This must always be reported following safeguarding procedures.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Leadership Team

- Maintain strategic oversight of the Trust's compliance with statutory requirements.
- Receive and review a high-level summary from SLT on implementation, compliance, key risks and areas for development.
- Provide appropriate challenge and seek assurance that any identified actions are being addressed.
- Approve and review the policy in line with the Trust's policy review cycle or following significant changes to legislation or statutory guidance.

SLT

- Ensure that this policy is implemented consistently and effectively across the Trust.
- Ensure that provision complies with statutory guidance and is aligned with safeguarding, curriculum, equality and SEND requirements.
- Oversee the monitoring and evaluation of curriculum delivery, accessibility, pupil outcomes and the quality of provision.
- Ensure that parents and carers receive clear and transparent information about curriculum content, resources, external providers and withdrawal rights.
- Identify and respond to any gaps, risks or areas of non-compliance.
- Report to Trustees through a proportionate, high-level summary of compliance, impact, key risks and actions taken.

PD / PSHE Lead

- Design, sequence and quality assure the RSHE curriculum
- Ensure alignment with DfE 2025 updates:
  - Online safety
  - Misogyny / harmful attitudes
  - Mental health and wellbeing

- Provide staff CPD
- Lead the RSHE consultation process

Staff
- Deliver RSHE in a safe, inclusive and developmentally appropriate way
- Deliver RSHE using the agreed curriculum sequence
- Adapt teaching for SEND needs using agreed strategies
- Follow safeguarding procedures immediately
- Use agreed language and scripts for sensitive topics

Safeguarding Team (DSL)
- Lead on disclosures
- Support staff with sensitive issues
- Ensure RSHE reflects local safeguarding risks

8. Procedures / Arrangements

8.1 Policy Consultation
- Parents will be given notice of the consultation process and will have an opportunity to feed back on the policy and related curriculum materials.

8.2 Curriculum Delivery
- Curriculum content reflects guidance from the DfE: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance, July 2025.
- RSHE is delivered through PSHE, Science and Computing, including links to online safety, as set out in the curriculum overview. It is also delivered through wider Personal Development programmes, such as drop-down days and targeted interventions.
- Resources are regularly reviewed and updated based on educational research, the demands of the curriculum, and governmental guidance.
- It may also be appropriate to adjust when topics are delivered, based on the needs of the young people being taught.
- Additional opportunities to learn about RSHE may be built into the curriculum to ensure we are meeting the contextual needs of young people.

8.3 SEND and Inclusive Practice

RSHE is fully adapted to meet the needs of learners with SEND. Adaptations include, but are not limited to, the use of:
- Visual supports (symbols, social stories)
- Simplified language
- Repetition and overlearning

Teaching focuses on:
- Real-life scenarios
- Independence skills
- Relationships of all kinds

8.4 How staff will respond to questions about sensitive curriculum topics
- Respond calmly, respectfully and without judgement or embarrassment.
- Use clear, factual and developmentally appropriate language, adapted to the pupil's communication and SEND needs.
- Keep responses within the agreed curriculum, Trust policy and staff guidance.
- Acknowledge when a question would be better addressed individually or by an appropriate member of staff, rather than in a group setting.
- Avoid sharing personal views or experiences, making assumptions, or providing more detail than is appropriate.

- Follow safeguarding procedures immediately if a question or comment indicates a possible concern, disclosure or risk of harm.
- Seek advice from the PD/PSHE Lead or DSL when unsure how to respond.
- Staff will use inclusive language when teaching RSHE. Appendix Two provides guidance on inclusive language and avoiding heteronormative or cisnormative assumptions.

- Staff are trained to:
  - Teach RSHE effectively and sensitively
  - Recognise vulnerability to exploitation
  - Reinforce safe behaviours consistently

8.5 Safeguarding

RSHE is a key safeguarding curriculum and supports pupils to:

- Recognise abuse, coercion and exploitation
- Understand consent and boundaries
- Identify trusted adults and how to seek help

All disclosures and safeguarding concerns are managed in line with JBA's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and KCSIE.

RSHE lessons are not confidential spaces. Staff will make clear, in an age and developmentally appropriate way, that they will listen respectfully but must pass on any concern where a pupil may be at risk of harm or where safeguarding action may be required. Any disclosure, concern or indication of risk will be recorded and reported in line with the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

8.6 Parental Engagement

The Trust will:

- Consult parents on RSHE policy development. See Appendix One for how consultation will take place.
- Provide access to curriculum materials on request
- Communicate clearly about:
  - Content
  - Approach
  - Safeguarding rationale

Parents and carers have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education delivered as part of the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum. This right applies only to those elements of sex education that are not part of the National Curriculum for Science, and does not apply to relationships education or health education, both of which are statutory and must be taught to all pupils.

In primary settings, where sex education is provided beyond the statutory science curriculum, parents have an automatic right to withdraw their child. In secondary settings, parents may request withdrawal from specific sex education content; the school will normally grant this request, except in exceptional circumstances, following discussion with parents to ensure they are fully informed of the curriculum content and its safeguarding importance.

This right to request withdrawal remains in place up to three terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the young person wishes to receive sex education, the school will make arrangements to provide this during one of those terms.

The school will always seek to work in partnership with parents, providing clear information about the curriculum and addressing any concerns. All decisions will be made with careful consideration

of the best interests, safeguarding needs and developmental stage of the pupil, particularly for those with special educational needs and disabilities.

8.7 External Providers

Before any external provider delivers RSHE content, leaders will check the provider's suitability, safeguarding arrangements, materials, approach to SEND accessibility and alignment with this policy. External providers will be briefed on the needs of the pupil group, agreed language, confidentiality boundaries and safeguarding reporting routes.

Where external agencies are used:

- Content must align with Trust policy and DfE guidance
- Materials must be transparent and shareable with parents when requested.
- Staff must remain present during delivery

9. Monitoring, Compliance and Review

The Trust will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of RSHE through a proportionate range of quality assurance activities. These include curriculum review, scrutiny of curriculum plans and resources, pupil voice, staff feedback, safeguarding themes, parent/carer feedback, and review of any concerns or incidents linked to relationships, online safety, sexualised behaviour, harassment, misogyny, exploitation or wellbeing.

Leaders will use this information to identify strengths, gaps, emerging risks and training needs. Where actions are identified, these will be recorded, followed up and reported to Trustees through existing safeguarding, curriculum or personal development reporting routes.
Trustees will receive a high-level summary of RSHE compliance, implementation, key risks and any significant areas for development. The policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner where there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding requirements or the needs of the pupil population.

Appendix One – Consultation process for RSHE Policy

Stakeholder Consultation Plan for RSHE Policy

1. Purpose of Consultation
To ensure the RSHE policy:

- Reflects the needs and experiences of pupils with SEND
- Is accessible, inclusive and developmentally appropriate
- Has the confidence and support of parents, staff and wider stakeholders
- Meets statutory requirements while respecting the school community

2. Key Stakeholders

- Pupils (across needs, ages, and communication profiles)
- Parents and carers
- Teaching and support staff
- Senior leaders and trustees/governors
- External professionals (e.g. therapists, school nurses, SEND specialists)

3. Consultation Methods

A. Pupils
Use adapted, developmentally appropriate approaches:

- Structured classroom discussions using visuals, symbols, and social stories
- One-to-one or small group sessions supported by familiar adults
- Communication tools, e.g.:
    - PECS / symbol-supported surveys
    - Visual rating scales (e.g. happy/neutral/worried faces)
    - AAC devices where appropriate
- Scenario-based learning to explore understanding of:
    - relationships
    - safety
    - personal boundaries

Key questions:

- What helps you feel safe in relationships?
- What would you like to learn about growing up?
- How do you prefer to learn about private or sensitive topics?

B. Parents and Carers
Offer flexible and supportive engagement:

- Accessible surveys (plain language, translated if needed)
- Workshops/information sessions explaining:
    - curriculum content
    - safeguarding rationale
    - legal context (e.g. right to withdraw)
- Drop-in sessions / coffee mornings for informal discussion
- Targeted conversations for parents of pupils with complex needs

Key areas:

- Expectations and concerns about RSHE
- Cultural or religious considerations
- Preferences for involvement in learning

C. Staff
Engage all relevant staff:

- Staff surveys on confidence, training needs, and challenges
- Focus groups (teachers, TAs, pastoral staff)
- Department/phase discussions to ensure progression and consistency
- Safeguarding team input to align policy with protection procedures

D. Executive Leadership Team

- Review draft policy and consultation outcomes
- Ensure alignment with statutory guidance and safeguarding duties
- Provide strategic challenge and oversight

E. External Professionals

- Consult with:
  - Speech and Language Therapists
  - Educational Psychologists
  - School Nursing Services
  - Local authority SEND advisors
- Gather advice on:
  - appropriateness of content
  - accessibility strategies
  - safeguarding implications

4. Timeline

Phase	Activity
Phase 1: Preparation	Draft outline policy and design accessible consultation materials
Phase 2: Consultation — four weeks	Collect input from all stakeholders using varied methods
Phase 3: Analysis	Collate and review feedback, identify themes
Phase 4: Policy Development	Revise policy in response to feedback
Phase 5: Approval	Present to trustees/governors for sign-off
Phase 6: Communication	Share final policy with all stakeholders

5. Ensuring Accessibility

- Use:
  - Easy-read versions (symbols and simplified text)
  - Audio or video explanations
  - Translated materials where required
- Provide support for completing surveys
- Offer alternative formats upon request

6. Recording and Responding to Feedback

- Maintain a consultation log of:
  - participation levels
  - main themes
- Clearly document:
  - what changes were made
  - reasons for decisions (especially where suggestions are not adopted)

Appendix Two: Inclusive Language Guidance for RSHE

Definitions:

Heteronormative	A discourse based on assumption that heterosexuality is the norm and privileges this over any other form of sexual orientation.
Cisnormative	A discourse based on assumption that cisgender is the norm and privileges this over any other form of gender identity.

RSHE will be taught using language that is respectful, inclusive, factual and developmentally appropriate. Staff should avoid making assumptions about pupils' families, identities, future relationships or personal experiences. Inclusive language helps all pupils feel recognised and supports a safe learning environment where difference is treated with dignity and respect.
Staff should use neutral and inclusive examples where appropriate, while ensuring that teaching remains clear, accurate and accessible for pupils with SEND. Staff should also challenge discriminatory, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or racist language or attitudes in line with the Trust's behaviour, safeguarding and equality policies.

Staff should avoid assuming that romantic or sexual partners will be of the opposite sex. Staff will model neutral language and use examples that reflect single-parent families, blended families and families with same-sex parents.

Rather than saying…
Boys become attracted to girls and vice versa.
…try saying:
You may become attracted to other people.
Rather than saying…
Mothers and fathers; boyfriends and girlfriends; husbands and wives; he or she; boys and girls; guys
…**try saying:**
Parents and carers; partners; spouses; they; people; folks

Information on contraception, sexual health and healthy relationships will take into account the full spectrum of sexual identification and preference.

Rather than saying…
Sex is where a penis is put in a vagina. There may be a risk of pregnancy from sex, so you should wear a condom.
…try saying:
Sex can mean different things to different people; it generally refers to intimacy involving genitals. Because of the risk of sexually transmitted infections (and pregnancy, for some people), it is important to use barriers.

Staff must use language that is respectful, inclusive, factual and developmentally appropriate. They should challenge and report homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, sexist or racist language, stereotypes or attitudes in line with school and Trust policies.