Relationships, Sex and Health Education

Frequency of Review:	Every year
Date of Approval:	Summer 2026
Date of Next Review:	September 2027
Adopted by the Board of Empower Trust	

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The **Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy** for **Empower MAT** is designed as a single, generic document to be used across all primary schools, supplemented by a school-specific appendix to meet local statutory requirements.

The policy reflects the **2025 DfE statutory guidance** (for introduction by September 2026), ensuring the Trust meets updated standards for online safety, mental health, and physical wellbeing.

Empower MAT: Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

1. Introduction and Statutory Framework

This policy covers **Empower MAT's** approach to Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). This is a statutory policy produced in accordance with **Section 80A of the Education Act 2002** and **Section 403 of the Education Act 1996**.

The **Trust Board** holds ultimate responsibility for this policy and its implementation across the MAT. Individual schools are responsible for **consulting with their parents**, ensuring the curriculum meets the needs of their specific community, and managing daily delivery.

2. Rationale and Ethos

Empower MAT believes that effective RSHE is essential to provide a **balanced and broadly-based curriculum** that promotes the **spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development** of pupils. Our aim is to help children grow into **kind, caring adults** who respect others and know how to keep themselves and others safe.

3. Subject Definitions

In line with DfE requirements, we differentiate between the three components of the curriculum:

- **Relationships Education (Statutory):** Compulsory for all primary pupils. It focuses on the building blocks of positive, safe relationships with family and friends.
- **Health Education (Statutory):** Compulsory for all primary pupils. It focuses on physical health and mental wellbeing, including learning the **correct names for body parts (including genitalia)** to support safeguarding and reduce stigma.
- **Sex Education (Non-Statutory):** While not compulsory for primary schools, the DfE **strongly recommends** its inclusion in later primary years.

4. Sex Education in Year 5 and/or Year 6 Only

Following DfE recommendations, Empower MAT schools provide a specific unit of **Sex Education exclusively for Year 5 and/or Year 6 pupils**.

- **Content:** This unit is limited to teaching about **human conception and birth**.
- **Context:** This teaching builds upon the biological foundations of human growth and reproduction already covered in the **National Curriculum for Science**.
- **Purpose:** To ensure pupils have a factual, age-appropriate understanding of reproduction before transitioning to secondary school.

5. Updated Curriculum Content (2025/2026 Standards)

The RSHE curriculum across the MAT is progressively sequenced and includes new content to reflect the modern world:

- **Online Safety & Wellbeing:** Increased focus on **online financial harms** (gaming, scams), privacy and the reasons for **age restrictions** on social media and gambling sites.
- **Personal Safety:** Recognising and reducing risk in the context of **fire, water, roads and railways**.
- **Mental Health:** Learning about **change, loss and bereavement**, and strategies for managing difficult feelings like loneliness or frustration.
- **Relationship Skills:** Developing **assertiveness** and the ability to express needs and **boundaries**.

6. Curriculum Delivery

RSHE is primarily delivered by class teachers as part of a planned PSHE programme. Individual schools may also use specialist PSHE leads or trained external providers to support delivery of specific topics. Details of any external providers used, including their role and qualifications, are set out in each school's specific appendix (Appendix 1).

Parents can view the teaching materials and resources used in RSHE lessons by contacting their child's school. The process for accessing these materials is detailed in each school's specific appendix (Appendix 1).

7. Inclusion, Equality, and Diversity

In accordance with the **Equality Act 2010**, we ensure RSHE is accessible to all, including pupils with **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**. Teaching will be sensitive to the religious and cultural views of our communities and will **respectfully represent different family types**, including LGBT families.

When planning and delivering RSHE, teachers take into account the religious and cultural backgrounds of all pupils to ensure content is taught sensitively and appropriately. The Trust complies with the **Equality Act 2010,** ensuring that teaching does not discriminate against pupils or amount to harassment, while also ensuring pupils understand the law as it applies to relationships.

8. Safe and Effective Practice

To ensure a safe learning environment, staff follow established best practices:

- **Ground Rules:** Agreed upon by teachers and pupils for every lesson.
- **Distancing Techniques:** Using stories or case studies to discuss sensitive issues without personal disclosure.
- **Questions:** Teachers will answer pupils' questions factually and age-appropriately. Anonymous "question boxes" may be used.

8a. Managing Questions Beyond the Curriculum

Pupils may ask questions about topics that go beyond the sex education covered in Year 5/6, or that relate to sex education from which they have been withdrawn.

When this happens, teachers will:

- Acknowledge the question in a supportive and non-judgemental way
- Provide factual, age-appropriate information where it relates to statutory Relationships or Health Education
- Suggest that the pupil speaks to their parent/carer or another trusted adult about questions that go beyond the school's sex education curriculum

- Signpost to appropriate support services where safeguarding concerns arise
- Recognise that children whose questions go unanswered may turn to inappropriate sources of information, including online

Teachers receive training and support in handling sensitive questions, particularly those that are better addressed on a one-to-one basis or outside the whole-class setting.

8. Right to Withdraw

Parents have the **legal right to withdraw** their child from the non-statutory **Sex Education** unit in Year 5 and/or Year 6.

- There is **no right to withdraw** from any part of **Relationships Education or Health Education**.
- There is **no right to withdraw** from biological aspects of human growth and reproduction that form part of the **National Curriculum for Science**.
- Requests for withdrawal must be made to the individual school's **Headteacher/Head of School**.

Parents wishing to exercise their right to withdraw should contact their child's Headteacher/Head of School to discuss their concerns and the school's approach to sex education. The school will work with parents to address concerns and explore alternative arrangements where appropriate. The process for requesting withdrawal is detailed in each school's specific appendix (Appendix 1).

9. Monitoring and Review

This MAT-wide policy will be reviewed every year to ensure it remains in line with current DfE advice and meets the needs of our pupils.

The policy review process includes:

- Consultation with parents across all schools in the Trust
- Input from staff, including PSHE/RSHE leads
- Review by the Trust Board
- Consideration of any changes to statutory guidance or local needs
- Feedback from pupils on the effectiveness and impact of RSHE teaching (where appropriate to age of children)

10. References

2025 Writing and updating your school's Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy.pdf
Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education - GOV.UK
Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK
Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK

Appendix 1: St Peter's Primary School and Nursery, Wem – RSHE Information

1. Local Ethos and Consultation

At St Peter's Primary School and Nursery, Wem, our approach to Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) reflects our commitment to nurturing every child within a safe, caring and inclusive environment. Guided by our Christian values, we support children in developing respect, kindness, resilience and responsibility.

We work closely with parents and carers and value their role as children's first educators. RSHE is delivered in an open, transparent and responsive way.

Parental consultation (Summer 2026) included sharing curriculum changes and gathering feedback through a whole school survey. Feedback helped ensure age-appropriate teaching, clarity about Year 6 content and access to materials.

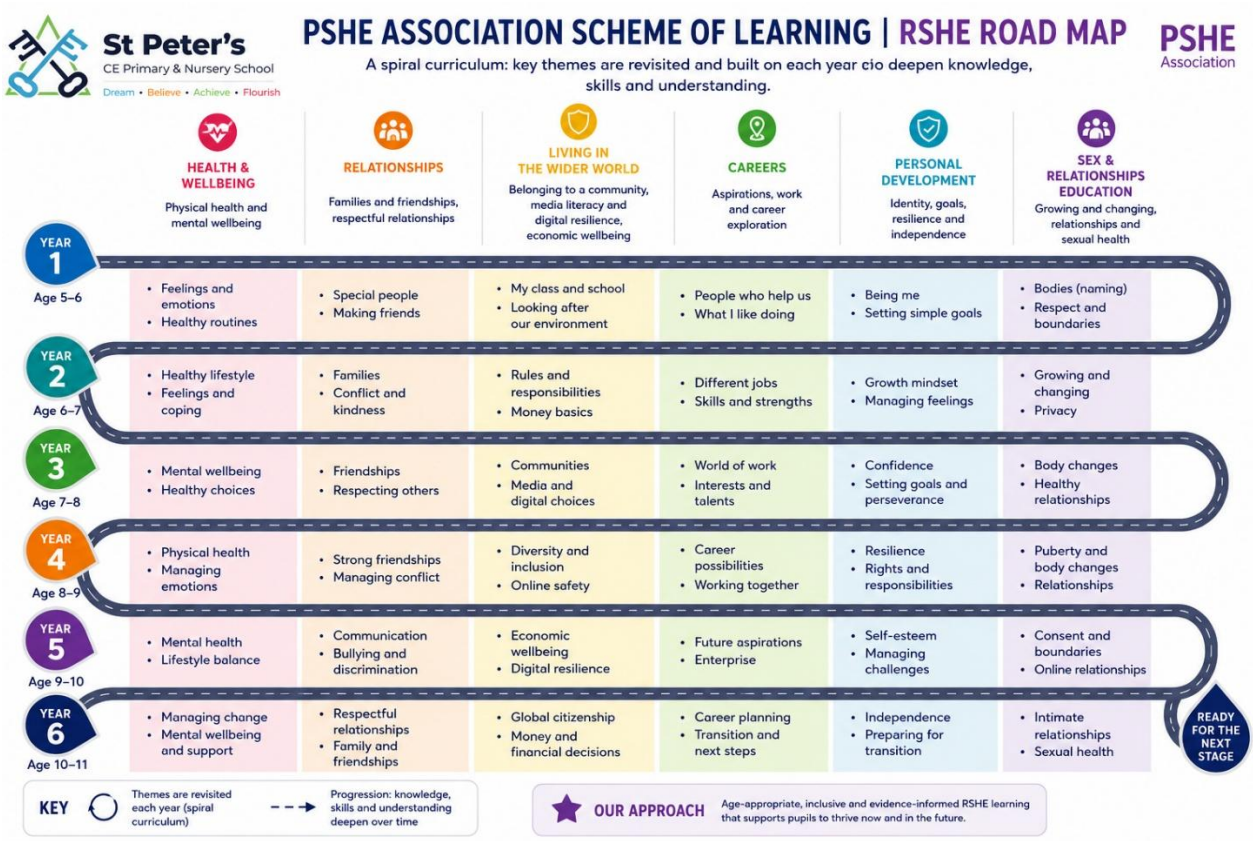
Consultation will continue annually and when significant changes occur.

2. Curriculum Mapping

RSHE is taught through a planned PSHE curriculum following the PSHE Association Programme of Study. Learning is progressive and age-appropriate.

EYFS: friendships, feelings, safety, healthy routines and kindness.
Year 1: friendships, feelings, families, home safety, healthy habits.
Year 2: belonging, emotions, growing and safety, online safety, local safety, money.
Year 3: identity, emotions, healthy lifestyle, online safety, risk and first aid.
Year 4: wellbeing strategies, risk, relationships, puberty, families, money and media.
Year 5: friendships, wellbeing, boundaries, online safety, healthy habits, global awareness.
Year 6: mental health, money, puberty, relationships, drugs, online safety, transition.

Sex Education is taught in Year 6 in the Spring Term and includes puberty and how a baby is made.



Sex Education is taught in Year 6 in the Spring Term and includes puberty and how a baby is made.

3. Access to Teaching Materials

Parents can view RSHE materials by contacting the school office, emailing staff, or attending information sessions. We aim to provide full transparency and welcome questions.

4. External Providers

We may work with visitors such as the School Nursing Team and safeguarding specialists. We are fortunate to also be supported by other charities to supplement our curriculum such as the RSPCA, HSBC and SHOUT.

All visitors are vetted, qualified and supervised.

5. School Contacts

RSHE/PSHE Lead: Kelly

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the non-statutory Sex Education elements taught in Year 6.

If you are considering this, please follow these steps:

Contact the school office Admin@stpeters.empowermat.co.uk

Speak with the Headteacher/ Deputy head

You will be given the opportunity to review the lesson content and resources and discuss any concerns

If you decide to proceed, confirm your request in writing to the Headteacher

Please note:

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education, Health Education or Science content.

We encourage parents to discuss any concerns with us so we can support and reassure you.

We are always happy to help and work in partnership with families.

6. Pupil Voice

Pupil feedback is gathered through discussions, questionnaires and school council. This ensures RSHE remains relevant, engaging and effective.

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