PSHE, SMSC, and RSE Policy

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1. Aims

This policy sets out our school's approach to Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).

We aim to:

- Equip pupils with knowledge, skills and attributes to keep themselves healthy and safe, and prepare for life and work.
- To provide information and teaching in an age-appropriate way.
- Promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Enable pupils to build respectful relationships and understand human sexuality and diversity.

- Support the development of self-knowledge, empathy, resilience, and responsible citizenship.

2. Statutory Requirements

As an independent school, our statutory duties are set out in the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance (Department for Education, updated July 2025 and mandatory from 1 September 2026, replacing the 2019 guidance previously in force). We are required to deliver:

Lower school (Relationships Education):
- Relationships Education, in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017 (sections 34–35) and the Independent School Standards.
- There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education, or from any content taught as part of the science curriculum (including reproduction and human development) -see Section 5.

Middle to Upper school (Relationships and Sex Education):
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), as set out in the same statutory guidance and in the Independent School Standards, Part 1 (Standard 2A).
- Independent schools meet the broad intent of Health Education through Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education, which reflects our aims and ethos and encourages respect for other people, with particular regard to the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010, in accordance with the Independent School Standards, Part 1, paragraph 2(2)(d).

In meeting Standard 2A of the Independent School Standards, we keep this RSE policy as a distinct, clearly identifiable part of our curriculum documentation; consult parents before it is created or substantively revised; and publish it on the school website, with a free copy available to anyone who asks for one.
[Reviewer note, October 2026: please confirm (a) that this policy is currently published on the school website and copies are available on request, and (b) that parents have been or will be consulted on this revision before it goes to trustees - these are explicit requirements of Standard 2A, and I cannot verify current practice from the document alone. Remove this note once confirmed.]

We also have regard to:
- The Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- The Education Act 1996 (sections 403, 406 and 407), on the manner of provision of sex education and on political impartiality.
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the promotion of fundamental British values).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, which requires our RSHE curriculum to form part of a whole-school approach to safeguarding -including online safety, harmful sexual behaviour, misogyny, and support for gender-questioning pupils (see our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

3. Curriculum Content and Delivery

In line with the RSHE statutory guidance (July 2025), our curriculum is planned and delivered according to the following principles: engagement with pupils; engagement and transparency with parents; building positive attitudes and healthy norms; careful sequencing of content in an age-appropriate order; relevance and responsiveness to our school community; skilled delivery by trained staff or vetted external providers; and a whole-school approach that integrates RSHE with our safeguarding and behaviour policies.

3.1 What We Teach

Our curriculum is delivered through:

- Main Lesson content.
- Subject lessons on specific topics or content.
- Celebration of festivals.
- Life skills through nature, arts, and storytelling.

3.2 How We Teach It

- Weekly PSHE lessons.
- Integration across curriculum and whole-school events.
- Differentiated teaching for SEND pupils.
- Use of vetted external speakers.
- Parental notification of sensitive content.
- Emphasis on discussion, reflection, and respectful dialogue.

3.3 Statutory Content Updates (from September 2026)

Beyond our existing curriculum, the following content areas are now required by the updated RSHE statutory guidance (July 2025) and by Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, and are being embedded across the relevant classes:

- The correct anatomical names for body parts, taught age-appropriately from an early age, to support safeguarding and abuse recognition.
- Personal safety, including risks around roads, railways, water and fire.
- Change, loss and bereavement, recognising that grief affects children differently.
- Online safety, including the permanence and public nature of online content; risks from AI-generated content such as deepfakes and AI chatbots that can create “fake intimacy” or give harmful advice; online financial harms (for example gaming/loot-box monetisation, scams and fraud); and age restrictions on gambling and social media.
- Vaping and nicotine addiction, introduced from the lower school.
- Assertiveness and boundary-setting, including strategies for resisting pressure to share personal information or images online.
- (Middle to Upper school) The influence of pornography and other online content on attitudes and behaviour, and the risks of AI-generated sexual imagery.
- (Middle to Upper school) Misogyny and harmful sexual behaviour, and their links to extremist subcultures and violence against women and girls.
- (Middle to Upper school) Legal literacy, including the Online Safety Act 2023, the age of criminal responsibility, and Gillick competence.
- (Middle to Upper school) Female genital mutilation (FGM): that it is illegal, how to recognise warning signs, and where to get help -this links directly to the mandatory FGM reporting duty in KCSIE 2026.
- Biological sex and the protected characteristic of gender reassignment: pupils are taught the facts and the law, and that people with this protected characteristic must be treated with respect and dignity. In line with statutory guidance, staff do not teach contested views on gender identity as fact and avoid materials that oversimplify this topic or encourage pupils to question their gender. Any pupil request relating to social transition is handled through our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (KCSIE 2026, Part Two), with parents involved wherever this does not increase risk to the child.

Checked against our curriculum (PSHE Curriculum, Sept 2026 update): human reproduction and birth content sits at Class 5 (Year 6 age), meeting the Years 5–6 recommendation -see the correction to Appendix 1.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Trustees: Approve the policy and monitor implementation.
Pastoral Lead: Oversee delivery and support staff.
Staff: Teach with sensitivity, monitor progress, model positive behaviours.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): ensures the RSHE curriculum and its delivery reflect current safeguarding priorities and guidance (KCSIE), including online safety, harmful sexual behaviour, and support for gender-questioning pupils.
Pupils: Engage respectfully and reflectively.

5. Right to Withdraw

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education, or from any content taught as part of the science curriculum, at any stage (RSHE statutory guidance, DfE, July 2025, para 21). This withdrawal framework applies to Relationships Education and RSE; as independent schools do not deliver statutory Health Education, that specific provision does not apply to us, and our PSHE provision sits outside the statutory withdrawal framework entirely.

Lower school: parents may request that their child be withdrawn from sex education taught outside the science curriculum. The Teaching and Learning Lead must automatically grant this request (RSHE statutory guidance, July 2025, para 18).

Middle to Upper school: parents may request that their child be withdrawn from sex education, other than content taught as part of the science curriculum, by written request to the Teaching and Learning Lead (teachingandlearning@waldorfcambridge.uk). The Teaching and Learning Lead may refuse such a request in exceptional circumstances -for example, safeguarding concerns or a specific vulnerability affecting the pupil (RSHE statutory guidance, July 2025, para 18). In such cases, the DSL/Pastoral Lead should also be included, given the safeguarding dimension emphasised in KCSIE 2026.

From three terms before a pupil turns 16, that pupil may choose to receive sex education in one of those terms, even where their parent has requested their withdrawal; we will ensure pupils are made aware of this right (RSHE statutory guidance, July 2025, para 19).

Where a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, we will ensure they receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal (RSHE statutory guidance, July 2025, para 20).

6. Assessment and Monitoring

- Combines self-reflection, peer feedback, and teacher observation.
- Progress is shared in reports and parent meetings.
- Annual policy review by the Pastoral Lead and College.

7. Related Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Prevention of Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Careers and Guidance Policy

Appendices

Appendix 1: PSHE and RSE Curriculum Map (Indicative)

Include year-by-year or stage-by-stage overview, such as:
Class 1: Fairytales, social rules, classroom responsibility.
Class 3: Money, practical skills, honesty, diversity.
Class 5: Democracy, world religions, human reproduction and birth.
Class 6: Rites of Passage, Anti-Bullying Week.
Class 7: Relationships and sex education (consent, contraception, STIs, pornography's influence), emotional wellbeing.
Class 8: Human rights, personal identity, careers.

Appendix 2: British Values Statement is available here Waldorf Cambridge - Curriculum

We promote:
- Democracy
- Rule of Law
- Individual Liberty
- Mutual Respect and Tolerance of Faiths and Beliefs

These values are embedded in our curriculum and school ethos.