



CONIFERS HOUSE SCHOOL

PSHE Policy

Relationships Education – Primary
Relationships Sex and Health Education – Secondary
Equality Act 2010 in the Curriculum
Equality and Diversity Aims and Objectives

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Aims

At Conifers House School, we believe that Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) provides children and young people with opportunities for lifelong learning about physical and mental wellbeing, moral and emotional development, and the wider world of which they are part. It helps pupils understand themselves and the people and world around them. Through PSHE, pupils develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to keep themselves healthy and safe and to prepare for life and work. This involves acquiring information, developing skills, and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

The aim of PSHE is to provide children and young people with age-appropriate information, explore attitudes and values, and develop skills to help them manage their lives now and in the future.

Our curriculum provides consistent, high-quality PSHE education for all pupils. We create and curate developmentally appropriate resources that can be adapted for our pupils. The curriculum is trauma-informed throughout.

The main aims of our curriculum are to enable pupils:

- to stay as healthy as possible;
- to learn how to keep themselves and others safe, including recognising signs of bullying and knowing where to turn for help;
- to learn how to use the internet, including social media, safely and responsibly;
- to develop effective, satisfying and safe relationships;
- to recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others, and to respect those differences;
- to become independent and responsible members of the school community;
- to become positive and active members of a democratic society;
- to develop self-confidence and self-esteem, and make informed choices about personal and social issues; and
- to develop good relationships with other members of the school and the wider community.

Through the curriculum, we support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. We actively promote the Fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, in line with the Independent School Standards.

Our PSHE curriculum is an essential part of our curriculum offer. It supports pupils to develop maximum independence and prepare for a safe and healthy adult life.

At Conifers House School, we believe that relationships and sex education are best considered as part of the ongoing PSHE curriculum. They are taught sensitively, taking careful account of each pupil's age, development and level of maturity. All pupils with additional needs have both a need and a right to learn about relationships and sexual development as part of their preparation for adult life in the community.

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place;
- prepare pupils for puberty and help them understand sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene;
- help pupils develop self-respect, confidence and empathy;
- create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships; and
- teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.

Overview

Conifers House School is an independent co-educational special school for pupils aged 5 to 16 with severe and complex learning difficulties, including autism and speech, language and communication needs. All pupils who attend Conifers House School have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

We adapt curriculum content, delivery and intended outcomes to make learning accessible to pupils with different levels of ability, development, communication and learning needs. Our PSHE curriculum provides opportunities for primary-aged pupils to learn Relationships Education and for secondary-aged pupils to learn Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), in preparation for adult life.

The school also teaches health-related content through PSHE at all key stages, at an appropriate level for pupils. As an independent school, Conifers House School is not required to have regard to the DfE's Health Education guidance, although relevant content may inform our curriculum.

Parents and carers are informed about the RSE curriculum and the withdrawal arrangements set out in this policy. The science curriculum includes content on human development, including reproduction; pupils cannot be withdrawn from science lessons. Where appropriate, pupils are supported to express their views about the RSE and health-related content they are taught.

Teaching staff, therapists and other relevant professionals contribute to the development and delivery of the curriculum, including through training and other appropriate opportunities. The curriculum has been developed with regard to the DfE's *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education* statutory guidance, which came into effect on 1 September 2026.

When planning teaching, the school considers pupils' religious backgrounds so that topics are handled appropriately.

The PSHE curriculum, including RSE and health-related content, is informed by relevant issues in the school and wider community so that it responds to pupils' needs.

Statutory requirements and guidance

Relationships Education is compulsory for pupils receiving primary education, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is compulsory for pupils receiving secondary education. These requirements apply to Conifers House School. Parents may request that their child is withdrawn from some or all sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE, in accordance with the arrangements set out in this policy. Pupils cannot be withdrawn from Relationships Education or from content taught as part of the science curriculum.

Conifers House School is an independent school. The statutory requirement to provide Health Education, and the DfE guidance on Health Education, do not apply to independent schools. The school nevertheless includes health-related content in its PSHE curriculum.

This policy has been prepared with regard to:

- Equality Act 2010;
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- Children and Social Work Act 2017;
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019;
- Department for Education, *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: statutory guidance* (revised guidance in force from 1 September 2026);
- Department for Education, *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*; and
- *National curriculum in England: science programmes of study*, where relevant to the school's science curriculum.

The school will keep this policy up to date, consult parents and carers when it is developed or reviewed, publish it on the school website and provide a copy free of charge on request.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability and Inclusion Policy;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy; and
- Data Protection Policy.

Curriculum Content - INTENT

Jigsaw is the main framework we use to plan and sequence the PSHE curriculum. We draw on the PSHE Association's Framework for Pupils with SEND, Learn Brook and other appropriate resources to support and supplement this work.

Our curriculum includes the statutory Relationships Education content for primary-aged pupils and statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) content for secondary-aged pupils. We also teach health and wellbeing content across the school as part of our PSHE curriculum. As an independent school, Conifers House School is not required to follow the DfE's Health Education guidance.

The curriculum is organised into three strands:

1. **Health and Wellbeing:** puberty, mental health, physical activity, dental care and healthy eating.
2. **Relationships:** respectful and healthy relationships, online and offline, kindness, keeping safe and sex education.
3. **Living in the Wider World:** careers, financial understanding, and rights and responsibilities.

The curriculum is progressive and revisits key themes so that pupils can build on prior learning. Teaching and resources are adapted to pupils' age, developmental level, communication and learning needs, while maintaining the statutory content. The sequence and detail of teaching are set out in the Primary Education and Secondary Education sections below.

The curriculum allows staff to respond appropriately to significant or topical issues affecting pupils and the wider community. Further information about the curriculum is available on the Conifers House School website.

Curriculum Delivery - Implementation

Class teachers deliver the PSHE curriculum and direct teaching assistants in supporting pupils' learning. Teachers are responsible for the planned teaching and monitoring of PSHE, including links with PE, ICT and other subjects. PSHE is taught through at least one timetabled session of one hour each week, with an opportunity for pupils to consolidate and reflect on their learning. Additional learning takes place through appropriate curriculum links and pupils' daily interactions.

Key messages are introduced, revisited and developed through a progressive, spiral curriculum. Teachers adapt resources, communication methods, pace and activities to pupils' age, development, learning and communication needs. Flexibility in delivery must preserve the planned curriculum content and statutory Relationships Education and RSE requirements.

Teaching uses active approaches such as discussion, role play, puppets, group work and problem-solving where these are suitable for the pupils. Staff establish clear, consistent ground rules and create a safe, supportive environment for learning about relationships, health and sensitive issues. Staff teach in a way that does not allow their personal beliefs to influence the curriculum.

Staff respond to pupils' questions in an age- and developmentally appropriate way. Any safeguarding concern or disclosure arising during PSHE teaching is dealt with promptly under the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where appropriate, visiting speakers or external organisations may contribute to PSHE teaching. The school reviews the proposed content and the provider's suitability in line with its safeguarding procedures. A member of school staff remains responsible for the session and supervises the contribution.

Pupils are supported to apply the skills they learn in everyday situations, such as resolving conflict, managing emotions and working with others. Teachers build on pupils' prior learning and adapt lessons to their physical, emotional and cognitive development.

Pupils' learning is evidenced in a PSHE floor book. Pupils are supported to contribute to it in ways that reflect their communication and learning needs, with opportunities for greater choice and independence where appropriate.

The school uses Zones of Regulation across the school day to help pupils notice, label and accept emotions and to develop emotional understanding and awareness, mental health and resilience.

Primary Education

Much of the learning for primary aged pupils takes place daily during their interactions with staff and other pupils, however there is a designated time slot on the timetable for at least one PSHE session per week with a consolidating session held towards the end of the week. Specific relationship and health education is taught in discrete PSHE sessions, science lessons, intervention groups and alongside other subject areas of the curriculum (for example through a topical English book, for example). The structure of the group's specific timetable will be dependent on the needs of the pupils within it, so the ways in which PSHE content is delivered will vary accordingly from group to group.

In primary classes 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 relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

Secondary Education

Secondary RSE builds on pupils' earlier learning. Where a pupil needs to continue working on earlier objectives, these are revisited while the curriculum also provides progression towards the secondary content set out below.

Teaching and resources are adapted to pupils' age, emotional maturity, development, learning and communication needs. These adaptations affect how content is taught and supported; the planned secondary curriculum remains in place. Jigsaw is used to plan and sequence learning, with additional suitable resources used where needed to cover the curriculum.

RSE is taught through discrete PSHE sessions and, where relevant, through science and other curriculum areas. Learning is reinforced in daily interactions and applied to real situations. The timetable and teaching approach may vary between groups to meet pupils' needs.

By the end of secondary education, the curriculum develops pupils' learning in these areas:

- **Families:** different family and committed relationship structures; marriage and civil partnership; the roles and responsibilities of parents; how relationships and families can change; and recognising when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help.
- **Respectful relationships:** kindness, respect, equality, self-respect, healthy boundaries, consent, managing conflict and relationship endings; bullying, stereotypes and prejudice; and recognising controlling or harmful behaviour.
- **Online safety and awareness:** privacy, online relationships and contact, evaluating online information, harmful content, social media and image-sharing; the legal and personal risks of sharing sexual images; AI-generated images and deepfakes; and how to seek help.

- **Being safe:** consent, boundaries and pressure; recognising and reporting abuse, sexual harassment and sexual violence; domestic abuse, coercive control, exploitation and grooming; forced marriage and female genital mutilation; and how to access support.
- **Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health:** the age of consent and the right to choose whether or when to have sex; consent and healthy sexual relationships; contraception, pregnancy and available options; sexually transmitted infections, including HIV; and how to access medically accurate advice and support.

Teaching about families recognises that pupils may live in different family and support arrangements. These are discussed respectfully, without stigmatising pupils because of their home circumstances.

Curriculum Outcomes – Impact

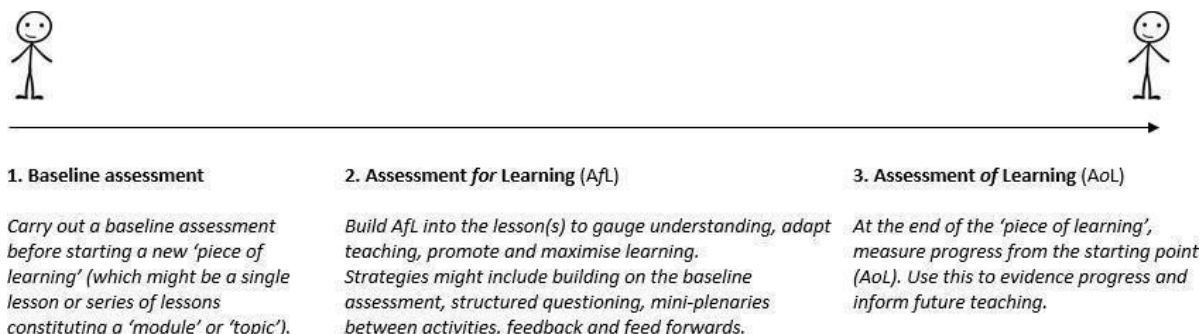
Teachers identify pupils' prior learning and assess progress over time against relevant curriculum objectives and the pupil's starting points. Assessment draws on observation, discussion, pupils' interactions and application of learning, and evidence such as work in PSHE floor books, photographs and other curriculum records. B Squared is used to record small steps of progress where appropriate.

Assessment takes account of pupils' communication and learning needs. Pupils are supported to share their views about their learning using communication methods and self-reflection approaches that are accessible to them. Self-assessment and peer assessment may be used where appropriate; they are not required where they are unsuitable for a pupil.

The Head of School or delegated PSHE lead monitors and evaluates the curriculum, including its delivery, coverage, accessibility and impact. This includes reviewing planning, assessment information, pupils' work and feedback from pupils, parents and staff where appropriate. Findings inform curriculum adjustments, staff support and improvement priorities.

The Executive Headteacher provides strategic oversight, constructive challenge and support. They use monitoring and evaluation findings to support school improvement and provide assurance to the proprietors and governors about curriculum implementation and identified actions.

Where relevant, teachers link PSHE outcomes to pupils' EHCP outcomes, including preparation-for-adulthood outcomes.



Model taken from PSHE Association Primary Toolkit 2017

Training

Staff who teach or support the delivery of PSHE and RSHE receive appropriate training to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence needed for their role. Training and briefing cover the curriculum, adapting teaching and resources for pupils' needs, establishing a safe environment for sensitive discussions, and responding to questions or disclosures.

Staff follow *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* and the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Any safeguarding concern arising during PSHE or RSHE teaching is passed on and recorded in line with that policy.

The Head of School identifies staff training needs and arranges appropriate training or support. These needs are reviewed when the curriculum, guidance or staff responsibilities change. Training may include input from the PSHE Association, NSPCC or other suitably qualified professionals.

Roles and responsibilities

The Conifers House School Board

The Conifers House School Board

The Board approves this policy and oversees its implementation. It holds the Head of School to account for ensuring that the policy is implemented and reviewed in line with current guidance.

The Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher provides strategic leadership, challenge and support in relation to compliance and school improvement. They support the Board and proprietors to understand assurance information, inspection findings, strategic risks, priorities for action and how the school is meeting its statutory duties and the Independent School Standards in practice.

The Executive Headteacher supports the Head of School and senior leaders with policy implementation, quality assurance, improvement planning, responses to external scrutiny and timely completion of actions arising from monitoring, incident review, inspection or other advice.

The Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy and for ensuring that PSHE and RSHE are taught consistently across the school. The Head of School arranges appropriate staff training and manages parental requests to withdraw pupils from sex education in accordance with this policy.

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- teaching and supporting PSHE and RSHE sensitively and in line with this policy;
- modelling respectful attitudes and responding to pupils' individual learning, development and communication needs;
- supporting pupils to participate and express their views in ways accessible to them;
- attending relevant training and following safeguarding procedures, including responding to concerns or disclosures; and
- referring questions or concerns about curriculum delivery to the Head of School.

Pupils

Pupils are supported to participate in PSHE and RSHE in ways appropriate to their abilities and communication needs. They are encouraged to share their views and to treat others with respect and sensitivity during lessons.

Parents' right to request withdrawal from sex education

Parents and carers may request that their child is withdrawn from some or all sex education delivered as part of the secondary Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum. This right does not extend to Relationships Education or content taught as part of the science curriculum.

Parents and carers may contact the Head of School to arrange to view the RSHE teaching materials. The school will explain how the relevant content is taught and answer questions about the programme. Staff will respond sensitively to pupils' questions, taking account of their age, development, communication and individual needs. Teaching will remain within the planned curriculum. If a question concerns sex education that the school does not teach, or content from which a pupil has been withdrawn, staff will respond appropriately and seek advice from the Head of School where needed. Any safeguarding concern or disclosure will be managed under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Primary pupils

Parents and carers cannot withdraw a child from Relationships Education or science. If the school provides sex education to primary pupils outside the science curriculum, the Head of School will grant a parent's or carer's request to withdraw the child from that teaching.

Secondary pupils

Parents and carers may request in writing that their child is withdrawn from some or all sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. The request should be sent to the Head of School, using the Conifers House School Relationships and Sex Education Secondary Parental Withdrawal Request Form in Appendix 4. Before deciding a request, the Head of School will discuss it with the parent or carer and, where appropriate, the pupil. The discussion will clarify the nature and purpose of the teaching and explore the parent's or carer's concerns, taking account of the pupil's circumstances and needs. The discussion and decision will be recorded.

The Head of School will grant the request unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as a safeguarding concern or a pupil's specific vulnerability. If a request is refused, the reasons will be recorded and explained to the parent or carer.

From three terms before a pupil turns 16, the pupil may choose to attend sex education even if their parent or carer has requested withdrawal. The school will make the pupil aware of this option.

A pupil who is withdrawn from sex education will receive appropriate, purposeful education during that time.

Appendix 1 - PSHE Curriculum response to significant events at Local Level



Appendix 2 - PSHE Curriculum response to significant events at National Level



Appendix 3 - PSHE Curriculum response to significant events at International Level



Appendix 4 - Parental Withdrawal Request Form



CONIFERS HOUSE SCHOOL
RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

SECONDARY PARENTAL WITHDRAWAL REQUEST FORM

Please complete the parent/carer section and return it to the Head of School.

1 PARENT / CARER REQUEST

Pupil's name _____ Year group _____ Date _____

Parent's / carer's name _____

I request that my child be withdrawn from:

- ☐ All sex education delivered as part of the secondary RSE curriculum
- ☐ The following sex education lesson(s) or topic(s):

Please note: The right to request withdrawal applies to sex education only. It does not apply to Relationships Education or content taught as part of the science curriculum.

Reason for the request (optional)

Other information you would like the school to consider, including relevant information about your child's needs (optional)

Parent's / carer's signature _____ Date _____

2 HEAD OF SCHOOL RECORD

Date request received _____ Date of discussion with parent / carer _____

Discussion: nature and purpose of teaching, parent/carer views and matters considered

Pupil's views, where appropriate, taking account of communication and individual needs

Decision ☐ Request granted ☐ Request refused in exceptional circumstances

If refused, record the exceptional circumstances and reasons

Arrangements for appropriate, purposeful education during withdrawal

☐ Pupil informed of option to attend from three terms before turning 16 ☐ Not applicable

Date parent/carer informed _____ Head of School name _____ Signature _____

Date _____

A copy of the request, discussion record and decision will be placed in the pupil's educational record.

Conifers House School | PSHE Including RSHE Policy | Appendix 4

Appendix 5: Equality Act 2010, the Curriculum and Equality and Diversity

Equality law and the curriculum

Section 89(2) of the Equality Act 2010 excludes matters connected with the content of the curriculum from Chapter 2 of Part 6 of the Act. This does not remove the school's obligations concerning how education is provided or its other duties under the Independent School Standards.

The Independent School Standards require the curriculum policy, plans and schemes of work to take account of pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs, including those with an Education, Health and Care Plan. They require PSHE to encourage respect for others, with particular regard to protected characteristics, and teaching not to discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010. The Standards also require the proprietor to actively promote fundamental British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Curriculum and SMSC principles

The school's curriculum and wider provision support pupils to:

- i. develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
- ii. distinguish right from wrong and respect the civil and criminal law of England;
- iii. accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to their locality and wider society;
- iv. acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England;
- v. develop tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions, and appreciation and respect for their own and other cultures;
- vi. respect other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010; and
- vii. respect democracy and support participation in democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

The Equality Act 2010 in the Curriculum at Conifers House School: Intent

Conifers House School will ensure that equal opportunities and fairness underpin its policies, procedures, education provision, consultation and decision-making. The school is committed to equality in the delivery of education, whether provided directly by the school or by a third-party provider. Senior leaders will monitor provision to ensure that pupils develop the skills to participate positively in their learning and behaviour and to become responsible members of society. The school aims to provide high-quality, accessible education. It will continue to consult staff, pupils, parents and carers, the Board, local communities and other partners about equality issues.

The school will promote equality of opportunity and ensure that provision is accessible and fair. Every person has the right to be treated fairly. The school will meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and make reasonable adjustments where required to support equality of access to education and to suitable learning and working environments.

Everyone who delivers or participates in the school's education will recognise diversity and promote fair treatment in their day-to-day work. The school will recognise pupils' individual needs, including special educational needs and disabilities, and provide a safe and accessible learning environment.

The school will comply with relevant legislation and have regard to applicable guidance. It will work with other people and organisations to promote fair treatment and use relevant information to plan and develop provision for its community.

Conifers House School will not tolerate discriminatory behaviour against members of the school or local community.

Equality and Diversity Aims and Objectives

Our aims

- To create a fair and inclusive community that promotes equality, respects diversity, and challenges and responds to discrimination, inequality and bullying.
- To celebrate difference and challenge racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of prejudice.
- To promote racial harmony and positive attitudes towards life in a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-faith society through the PSHE curriculum and relevant school activities.
- To promote equality of opportunity for all pupils, having regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, where relevant to pupils.
- To actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Our objectives

- To celebrate diversity across the curriculum, particularly through the PSHE curriculum.
- To encourage staff and pupils to celebrate cultural diversity and develop their understanding of fundamental British values.
- To encourage families to participate in school life through the school's approach to engaging with parents and carers.
- To ensure the school's motto, "Together We Grow and Shine", is reflected in an inclusive ethos that promotes diversity.
- To promote pupils' understanding of identity, diversity, community and equality through the PSHE curriculum and wider school life.
- To promote effective transitions into and from the school.
- To prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and their next stage of learning.

Appendix 6 – Curriculum examples illustrating SMSC and fundamental British values

