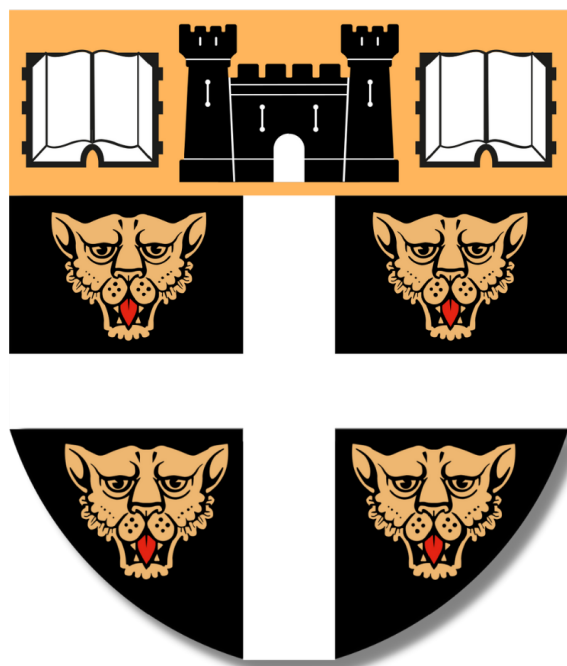


Relationship & Sex Education (RSE) Policy (Prep & Senior School)

Dover College



Owner:	DSL	Date: August 2026
Approved By:	CHAIR OF COUNCIL	Date: August 2026
Review Frequency	Annual	
Last reviewed on:	August 2026	
Next review due by:	August 2027	

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to all members of our school community, including boarders and those in our Prep School setting. Dover College is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy document.

This policy is written in accordance with the Department for Education statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSE) guidance (updated 2025).

Dover College seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document. This document is available to all interested parties on our website and on request from the PSHE Co-ordinator (daya@dovercollege.org.uk) Senior School and (ivesk@dovercollege.org.uk) Prep School, and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- School Behaviour Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated in response to changes in statutory guidance or safeguarding requirements.. The next scheduled date for review is June 2027.

A detailed, year-by-year overview of the RSE curriculum is published and made available to parents and carers annually.

RATIONALE AND ETHOS

RSE is a safeguarding subject and plays a key role in protecting pupils from harm, including abuse, exploitation, and unhealthy relationships, both online and offline.

High-quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of Relationships, Relationships and Sex and Health Education can help prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life, both in the real world and online. The aim of Relationships, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education is to give children and young people the skills, knowledge and understanding that they will need in order to make responsible decisions about their life, to learn to respect themselves and others, and to move with confidence from childhood into adolescence and adulthood. It is centrally concerned with supporting children and young people through their physical, emotional and moral development, helping to ensure they develop resilience, know how and when to ask for help, and know where to access support. All teaching will be developmentally appropriate and will not include explicit sexual content beyond that specified in statutory guidance.

At Dover College, we see RSE as just one part of a lifelong process of learning about relationships, emotions, sex, sexuality and sexual health. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and

forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes. Our overarching aim in RSE is to give pupils the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. Our teaching of RSE should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. We aim to teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships, to help students understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed. Teaching will remain politically impartial and balanced, particularly when addressing sensitive or contested issues.

TEACHING, CURRICULUM AND DELIVERY

Content Boundaries:

The school ensures that all RSE content is age-appropriate, evidence-based, and does not include explicit or inappropriate material. Teaching avoids the normalisation of harmful behaviours and is carefully sequenced in line with statutory guidance.

The topics covered within the RSE curriculum are wide-ranging and at times there may be understandable and legitimate areas of contention. This policy is designed to outline the purpose and content of RSE, whilst ensuring that all of the compulsory subject content is age and developmentally appropriate. We aim to teach RSE sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils and parents while always with the aim of providing pupils with the knowledge they need of the law and the legal implications of their actions. All topics will be delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way and allow scope for students to ask questions in a safe environment. The curriculum addresses issues in a timely way in line with current evidence on children's physical, emotional and sexual development. This is informed by pupils' voice and in response to issues as they arise in the school and the wider community. The curriculum explicitly addresses online harms, including exposure to pornography, misogyny, sexual harassment, and image-based abuse, in an age-appropriate way. Teaching about protected characteristics is factual, respectful and age-appropriate, and does not promote any particular political or ideological viewpoint.

RSE at Dover College is underpinned by a wider, deliberate cultivation and practice of resilience and character in the individual. Through our PSHE programme we aim to foster the personal, moral, spiritual, social and cultural development of our students, as well as helping to enhance their ability to cope with life and its modern demands. We aim to encourage our students to become kinder, more confident, more thoughtful and more responsible citizens in the communities in which they live and work.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that RSE is delivered in line with statutory guidance. The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and ensuring compliance with statutory requirements.

RSE will be delivered primarily by form tutors and selected staff members such as school nurses

with professional experience in delivering this content. All staff delivering RSE receive regular and up-to-date training to ensure subject knowledge and safeguarding understanding are current. All resources are made available to the form tutors in advance. A significant amount of RSE content is taught by the Science department as part of the science curriculum and the School may also invite in appropriate experts to teach specific topics within the RSE programme. We recognise that parents and/or carers play a key role in teaching their children about relationships and sex. The school aims to work with partners and carers to support them in preparing their children for happy and fulfilled relationships in adult life.

Schools are required to comply with relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). Schools must also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage and be mindful of the SEND Code of Practice when planning for the provision of RSE and other subjects.

We will consider whether it may be appropriate or necessary to put in place additional support for pupils with particular protected characteristics. We will take positive action to build a culture where sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes will not be tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled.

The School will refer to the SEND code of practice, where appropriate, and will also be aware that some students are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. RSE can be particularly important for those with social, emotional and mental health needs or learning disabilities, and such factors will be taken into consideration when designing and teaching the RSE curriculum.

SAFE AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

We will ensure a safe learning environment by requiring that certain 'ground rules' are established for each session and clearly understood by all those that take part. These may vary depending on the age of the students but are likely to include:

- Guidance on how potentially sensitive questions can be asked. Staff will use professional judgement when responding to pupil questions and will ensure that responses are age-appropriate and do not extend beyond the planned curriculum.
- A general expectation of privacy and the importance of being able to talk frankly in the session without fear of discussions being repeated outside the room without due cause
- How staff will respond if anyone shares anything they consider to be concerning, particularly any issues of a safeguarding nature (they must not promise confidentiality)
- The promotion of 'distancing techniques' that encourage pupils not to personalise their questions or discussions.

Pupils will not be encouraged to disclose personal or sensitive information during lessons.

Staff should bring any non-urgent issues for discussion to the pupil's Houseparent or form

teacher. Any urgent and/or safeguarding issues must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

SAFEGUARDING

Effective delivery of RSE necessarily allows students an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues, which may in turn lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. All Staff are trained in child protection and, if they receive a disclosure or have any concerns about a student in their class, should follow the School's normal safeguarding procedures as set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. RSE contributes to the prevention of child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, exploitation and online harm, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026).

Where visiting speakers are invited to support delivery of certain aspects of the RSE curriculum, they will be subject to the School's usual procedures for vetting visiting speakers. In addition, the School's PSHE Coordinators will brief them in advance regarding the School's safeguarding procedures and their RSE sessions will be attended by the PSHE Co-ordinator and/or relevant form tutors and/or Houseparents.

MONITORING, REPORTING AND EVALUATION

Quality Assurance

The quality of RSE education at Dover College is monitored through regular pupil voice and learning walks by Andrew Day (the PSHE Co-ordinator) in the Senior School and Kieron Ives (the PSHE co-ordinator) in the Prep School. Pupils and staff are involved in evaluation of the teaching programme as part of the annual review of PSHE. RSE provision is reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with current statutory guidance and safeguarding requirements. RSE is included within whole-school safeguarding audits and reviews.

Parents and Carers

This policy and the curriculum plan are made available to parents on the school website and a paper copy is available on request. Should parents or carers wish to discuss any aspect of the PSHE or RSE curriculum, they should contact the PSHE Co-ordinator for the Senior School, Andrew Day (daya@dovercollege.org.uk) or Kieron Ives (ivesk@dovercollege.org.uk) for the Prep School.

Right to Withdraw

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE (excluding Relationships Education and Health Education, which are compulsory). Parents will be provided with clear information about the curriculum content in advance of teaching.

Parents must state their request in writing to the Head. Parents will then be invited into School to discuss the request to ensure that their wishes are fully understood. We will discuss the educational rationale for RSE and ensure that parents are fully informed before making a decision. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the school will respect parental requests for

withdrawal in line with statutory guidance.

There is no right to withdraw from relationship education.

Pupils who are withdrawn will receive purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Pupils Three terms before the student turns 16 years old, he/she is legally able to make his/her own decision as to whether he/she receives sex education. The College will make arrangements to provide the student with sex education during one of those terms and a parental request of withdrawal will not be granted.

All pupils are informed of PSHE and RSE topics in advance of the lesson and are invited to talk to their form teacher or Houseparent individually should they feel uncomfortable about being in the session itself.

STAFF

All staff have the right to additional support and guidance from the PSHE Co-ordinator. Should a staff member not feel comfortable about delivering a certain topic, they are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.

RSE POLICY AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

The RSE policy and curriculum has been produced in line with statutory guidance from the Department for Education. Greater emphasis will be placed on online safety, including recognising harmful content, understanding privacy, and knowing how to seek help.

Prep School

Sex Education in the Prep School

Dover College provides age and developmentally appropriate Sex Education in the later years of the Prep School as a standalone element within PSHE, adapted to the age, maturity and needs of the pupils. This provision goes beyond content taught through the science curriculum and includes appropriate factual teaching about puberty, human reproduction, conception and birth, relationships, boundaries, consent and personal safety.

The detailed content and timing are set out in the College's published curriculum overview and are reviewed to ensure that teaching remains appropriate, evidence-based and consistent with statutory guidance.

Parents/carers are informed about the content in advance and are consulted on the College's approach. Parents/carers have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from this additional Sex Education. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or from relevant content taught as part of the science curriculum.

Where a pupil is withdrawn from additional Sex Education, the College will provide appropriate and purposeful alternative education.

By the end of Prep School

Relationships Education

Relationships Education is compulsory for pupils receiving primary education. The Prep School curriculum is age and developmentally appropriate and builds progressively so that, by the end of primary education, pupils have developed the knowledge and skills described below.

Families and people who care for me

Pupils will be taught:

- that families can provide children with love, security and stability, and that safe and happy family life is characterised by care, commitment and support;
- that families can take different forms and that pupils should respect differences in family structure;
- that stable and caring relationships are important to children's security and wellbeing;
- that marriage and civil partnerships are formal, legally recognised commitments intended to be lifelong;
- how to recognise when family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe and how to seek help or advice.

Caring friendships

Pupils will be taught:

- the importance of friendships and how people form and sustain them;
- the characteristics of healthy friendships, including kindness, honesty, trust, loyalty, generosity, mutual respect, shared interests and appropriate support;
- that healthy friendships should be positive and inclusive;

- that people sometimes experience loneliness, that there is no shame in this and that support is available;
- that friendships may experience difficulties and how these can be managed constructively;
- how to manage disagreement and conflict appropriately, recognising that violence is never an acceptable response;
- how to recognise when a friendship is making them unhappy or uncomfortable and how to seek support.

Respectful and kind relationships

Pupils will be taught:

- to recognise and pay attention to the needs and preferences of others while understanding their own needs and rights;
- the importance of establishing and respecting healthy boundaries with family members, friends, peers and adults;
- how to communicate effectively, manage disagreement with kindness and respect, express their needs and boundaries assertively and manage feelings such as frustration and disappointment;
- the distinction between assertiveness and controlling behaviour, and between kindness towards others and neglecting one's own legitimate needs;
- that they should expect to be treated with respect and should treat others respectfully, including people who have different backgrounds, beliefs, preferences or characteristics;
- practical skills which support healthy and respectful relationships;
- appropriate courtesy and manners;
- the importance of self-respect, self-esteem and developing a positive sense of self;
- different forms of bullying, including online bullying, their impact, the responsibilities of bystanders and how to seek help;
- what stereotypes are, why they may be unfair or harmful and how they can be challenged;
- how and where to seek help when they are concerned about harm, violence or are unsure whom to trust.

Online safety and awareness

Pupils will be taught:

- that respectful behaviour and healthy relationship principles apply online as well as face-to-face;
- not to pressure others to share information or images and how to resist online peer pressure;
- how to consider critically online friendships and sources of information;
- that people may pretend to be someone else online, including adults pretending to be children, and how this can create risk;
- how to recognise harmful online content and contact and how to report concerns;
- that social-media platforms have minimum ages for users and why age restrictions exist;

- the importance of protecting personal information, including through appropriate privacy and location settings;
- that material shared online may be copied and circulated and can become impossible to remove completely;
- that children may encounter inappropriate or upsetting material online and how to seek advice and support.

Being safe

Pupils will be taught:

- what appropriate personal boundaries look like, including online;
- the concept of privacy and that secrets should not be kept where they relate to safety;
- that their body belongs to them and how to distinguish appropriate from inappropriate or unsafe contact;
- how to respond safely to adults they encounter, whether known or unknown and whether face-to-face or online;
- how to recognise when a relationship or interaction may be harmful or dangerous and how to think carefully about whom they can trust;
- how to report abuse, unsafe experiences or concerning online content;
- the language and confidence needed to communicate concerns clearly;
- how to ask for help for themselves or someone else and to keep seeking help until they are heard.

Senior School

The curriculum includes explicit teaching on sexual harassment, misogyny, the impact of pornography, coercive control, and image-based abuse, delivered in an age-appropriate manner.

Relationships and Sex Education

Relationships and Sex Education is compulsory for pupils receiving secondary education. Teaching builds upon the Relationships Education provided in the Prep School and provides pupils with the knowledge and skills required to establish safe, healthy and nurturing relationships, understand sexual health and make informed and responsible choices.

By the end of secondary education pupils will have been taught the following, in an age and developmentally appropriate way.

Families

Pupils will be taught:

- that there are different types of committed and stable relationships and how healthy relationships can contribute to wellbeing;
- the importance of stable relationships in the upbringing of children;
- why marriage and civil partnership are important relationship choices for many people;
- the legal status, rights and protections associated with marriage and civil partnership compared with cohabitation and non-legally binding ceremonies;
- that “common-law marriage” does not confer the legal status or rights of marriage;
- that forced marriage and marriage below the age of 18 are unlawful;
- how family relationships can change through events such as birth, bereavement, separation and new relationships;
- the responsibilities of parents and characteristics associated with successful parenting;
- how to recognise when a relationship may be unsafe and how and where to seek help.

Respectful relationships

Pupils will be taught:

- the characteristics of healthy relationships of all kinds, including trust, respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, consent, boundaries, privacy, tolerance and appropriate management of conflict;
- how their behaviour affects other people and the importance of treating others with dignity, kindness and respect;
- the importance of self-esteem, independence, interests, friendships and a healthy relationship with oneself;
- the meaning and importance of tolerance, including respect for other people’s beliefs;
- skills for effective and respectful communication, including managing disagreement and conflict;
- different forms of bullying, including online bullying, the impact upon those involved and the responsibility of bystanders;
- how to end friendships and relationships respectfully and manage feelings associated with endings;
- the role of consent within relationships, while understanding that ethical and caring behaviour requires more than simply obtaining consent;
- how stereotypes can contribute to prejudice and harmful behaviour and how to recognise **misogyny and other forms of prejudice**;
- how inequalities and imbalances of power can affect relationships and an individual’s ability to assert their wishes and boundaries;
- how pornography can influence attitudes and expectations, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviour, misogyny and a sense of entitlement to other people’s bodies;
- how online subcultures and influencers, including misogynistic content and so-called “incel” communities, can influence attitudes towards relationships and sexual ethics.

Online safety and awareness

Pupils will be taught:

- about their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online and that expected standards of behaviour apply online and offline;
- how to protect personal information through appropriate use of privacy and location settings and the differences between public and private online spaces;
- how social-media accounts and content may be fake, exaggerated, manipulated or generated using artificial intelligence;
- the risks of sharing personal information, images and other content and the loss of control which can occur once material has been distributed;
- the law and safeguarding implications relating to sexual or indecent images of people under 18, including images created or altered using AI;
- that pupils who are concerned about an image of themselves should seek help and will be supported rather than blamed for reporting it;
- how to report concerning information, images, videos or other material;
- what **deepfakes** are, how they may be created and used maliciously and the harm they can cause;
- how online material can encourage misogyny, violence, weapon use or other harmful attitudes and behaviours;
- how social media can escalate disputes and how to avoid and respond to such escalation;
- how technology may be used in bullying, harassment, **stalking**, coercive and controlling behaviour and other abuse;
- how pornography and other online sexual material can distort expectations of relationships and sexual behaviour;
- how personal information and online activity may be collected and used commercially;
- how online scams operate, including **sextortion**, how to recognise them and how to seek support;
- that AI technologies, including conversational AI and chatbots, can create risks including false intimacy, manipulation or harmful advice, and the importance of thinking critically about emerging technology.

Being safe

Pupils will be taught:

- how to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including early romantic and sexual relationships;
- strategies for recognising and resisting pressure from peers or others, including sexual pressure, and the importance of not placing pressure upon others;
- how to assess whether people and relationships are trustworthy or unsafe and how to seek help;
- ways of increasing personal safety in public and social settings while being clear that responsibility for abuse always rests with the person causing the harm;

- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these behaviours are unacceptable;
- that sexual harassment can include unwanted sexual language or attention, unwanted touching, non-consensual taking or sharing of intimate images, public sexual harassment, pressure to engage in sexual activity and upskirting;
- the law relating to rape, sexual assault and other sexual violence;
- harmful sexual behaviour between children and young people;
- domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour and emotional, sexual, economic and physical abuse;
- that fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours may constitute criminal behaviour;
- sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, grooming and financial exploitation;
- forced marriage;
- the physical and emotional harm associated with **FGM, virginity testing and hymenoplasty**, relevant legal protections and where support can be obtained;
- that **strangulation and suffocation are dangerous and may constitute criminal offences**, including where no visible injury results;
- that pornography may present harmful or dangerous sexual activities as normal;
- how to seek support where they are worried about abusive behaviour they have experienced or are themselves displaying, including how to report abuse and obtain medical attention where necessary.

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Pupils will be taught:

- that consensual sexual relationships between people who are ready and above the age of consent can be positive and enjoyable;
- the law relating to the age of consent;
- that they can choose whether and when to have sex, that many young people choose to wait, and that romantic and intimate relationships do not have to involve sex;
- what sexual consent means, including the right to give, withhold or withdraw consent at any time;
- that decisions about sexual relationships may also involve personal, family, cultural, ethical or faith considerations;
- that kindness, care and respect remain necessary within sexual relationships and cannot be reduced simply to consent;
- how choices concerning sex and relationships may affect physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing;
- that some sexual behaviours can cause harm;
- the range, effectiveness and appropriate use of contraceptive methods, including condoms, and how to access medically accurate information;
- medically and legally accurate, impartial information about pregnancy and available choices, including continuing a pregnancy, adoption and abortion;

- how sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, are transmitted and how risks may be reduced;
- the role and availability of **PrEP and PEP** in preventing HIV;
- the importance of testing for sexually transmitted infections and the potential impact of stigma;
- the prevalence, effects and treatment of sexually transmitted infections;
- how alcohol and drugs may affect decision-making and contribute to risky sexual behaviour;
- how and where to seek support concerning sexual relationships, sexual violence or sexual harm;
- how to recognise and counter misinformation and where to obtain confidential, medically accurate sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

Equality, inclusion and the law

RSE will be taught inclusively and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Pupils will learn about the protected characteristics and the importance of equality, respect and freedom from discrimination.

At secondary level, pupils will have appropriate opportunities to consider healthy same-sex relationships as an integrated part of the curriculum. Teaching about biological sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and associated legal rights will be factual, age-appropriate and respectful. Where matters are subject to significant public or academic debate, contested views will not be presented to pupils as established fact. Pupils will be taught that people with protected characteristics are entitled to dignity and protection from unlawful discrimination.