Pear Tree Community Junior School

Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

2026-2027

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Policy owner	Andrew Sharp/Alex Wilde
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Important status note

This revised policy reflects the Department for Education statutory guidance that applies from 1 September 2026 and the school's use of Life Lessons as its main PSHE scheme. It remains a draft until approved by the governing board.

1. Purpose and status

This policy explains how Pear Tree Community Junior School provides Relationships Education and Health Education, how statutory science content is taught alongside it, and how the school manages any content that could be described as sex education. For convenience, the collective term RSHE is used in this policy.

The policy applies to all pupils in Years 3 to 6, all staff who teach or support RSHE, governors, visitors and external providers. It should be read with the school's safeguarding and child protection, behaviour, anti-bullying, online safety, equality, SEND and curriculum policies.

School position

Relationships Education and Health Education are compulsory; relevant science content is also compulsory; the school does not currently teach additional, non-statutory primary sex education beyond the science curriculum.

2. Aims

Our RSHE provision aims to give pupils accurate, age-appropriate knowledge and the language, skills and confidence to:

- form and sustain safe, kind and respectful relationships;
- understand healthy boundaries, communicate assertively and manage conflict without violence;
- recognise risks, abuse, bullying and harmful behaviour, including online, and know how to report concerns;
- make informed and ethical choices about their physical health, mental wellbeing and online lives;
- understand body changes, puberty and menstruation without shame or stigma;
- respect the different families, backgrounds, beliefs and protected characteristics represented in modern Britain;
- develop emotional regulation, resilience, empathy, oracy and critical thinking; and
- know when, where and how to seek help for themselves or someone else.

3. Legal and statutory framework

This policy has regard to the Department for Education's Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance for introduction from 1 September 2026. It is also informed by the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019;
- Children and Social Work Act 2017, sections 34 and 35;
- Education Act 2002, section 80A, and Education Act 1996, section 403;
- Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty;
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children; and
- the National Curriculum for science, computing and physical education.

The governing board must ensure that the curriculum and materials align with statutory guidance, teaching is accessible to pupils with SEND, expected outcomes are monitored, and parents receive clear information about content, materials, providers and withdrawal rights.

4. Definitions and the school position on sex education

Term	Meaning in this policy
Relationships Education	Compulsory primary teaching about families, friendships, respectful and kind relationships, online relationships, boundaries and being safe.
Health Education	Compulsory teaching about physical health and mental wellbeing, including online wellbeing, healthy choices, substances, prevention, safety, first aid and developing bodies.
Science curriculum	Compulsory content includes the main external body parts, growth and the human lifecycle, puberty, and reproduction in some plants and animals. Parents cannot withdraw pupils from science.
Sex education in primary	Teaching beyond Relationships Education, Health Education and the science curriculum. It is not compulsory in primary schools.
PSHE	The wider personal, social, health and economic curriculum through which much RSHE is delivered. Life Lessons is the school's main PSHE scheme.

Pear Tree Community Junior School does not currently teach additional, non-statutory primary sex education beyond the science curriculum. If the school proposes to change this position, it will consult parents, revise this policy, identify the specific content and timing, and explain the right to request withdrawal before teaching begins.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Governing board	Approves and reviews this policy; assures itself that statutory duties are met; checks accessibility, quality, parent information and the suitability of materials and providers.
Executive Headteacher / Head of School	Ensures implementation, staffing and training; decides on any request for withdrawal if optional sex education is introduced; ensures concerns and complaints are handled appropriately.
PSHE/RSHE subject leader	Maintains the curriculum map; maps Life Lessons and other provision to statutory content; quality-assures resources; supports staff; monitors teaching, participation and outcomes; coordinates parent information.
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Advises on sensitive content and local risks; supports staff with disclosures and concerns; ensures visitors understand reporting routes.
Teachers	Plan and teach the agreed curriculum; use approved resources; adapt provision; establish a safe learning environment; assess learning; answer questions appropriately; report safeguarding concerns immediately.
All staff and visitors	Model respectful conduct, avoid stereotyping and discrimination, maintain appropriate confidentiality and follow the safeguarding policy.
Parents and carers	Engage with information and consultation, discuss learning at home where appropriate, raise questions with the school and respect copyright conditions when viewing provider materials.
Pupils	Contribute to a respectful learning environment, take part in ways appropriate to them, and use the taught routes for help and reporting concerns.

6. Curriculum model: PSHE with Life Lessons

Life Lessons is the school's main PSHE curriculum scheme. It provides a planned sequence of lessons, teacher guidance, discussion prompts, visuals, vocabulary support, scaffolds, printables and assessment tools. The school remains responsible for all content and for the way in which it is taught.

Further information about the provider is available on the Life Lessons website.

The Life Lessons approach used by the school is built around:

- **Three perspectives:** understanding myself; self with others; self within the world.
- **Seven curriculum areas:** My body and me; Wellbeing; Healthy choices; Identity and community; Digital lives; Aspiration and money; Healthy relationships.
- **Five teaching principles:** positive, narrative, peer-led, inclusive and relational learning.
- **Transferable skills:** emotional regulation, mental strength and resilience, empathy, oracy and critical thinking.

Teachers use the scheme within the school's wider curriculum. Statutory content may also be taught through science, computing, PE, RE, assemblies, safeguarding education, enrichment and the wider life of the school. School-wide emotional-literacy approaches, including RULER where planned, may reinforce but do not replace the mapped RSHE curriculum.

Each year the subject leader will check the curriculum map against the September 2026 statutory end-of-primary content, identify gaps or duplication, and record where each item is taught, revisited and assessed. Provider materials may be adapted or supplemented where needed for statutory compliance, local context, pupil needs, accessibility or safeguarding.

7. Curriculum content

The curriculum is carefully sequenced so pupils encounter knowledge and protective skills before they are likely to need them. Appendix 1 summarises the content pupils should know by the end of primary. Particular priorities introduced or strengthened in the 2026 guidance include:

- healthy boundaries, assertive communication, balancing needs and recognising controlling behaviour;
- loneliness, change, loss and bereavement, and knowing that early support can help;
- recognising emotional, physical and sexual abuse and understanding that abuse is never the child's fault;
- online peer pressure, privacy and location settings, the permanence and circulation of content, minimum ages for social media, and harmful contact;
- online gaming, monetisation, scams, fraud, gambling-like content and addictive behaviours;
- healthy relationships with food, vaping and nicotine products, age-appropriate sleep guidance and practical sleep habits;
- personal safety around fire, roads, railways and water, and reporting incidents rather than filming them;
- correct anatomical vocabulary, body privacy, puberty and menstrual wellbeing; and
- civil partnerships, diverse family arrangements and respectful challenge to prejudice and stereotypes.

The detailed year-by-year sequence is maintained in the school's PSHE/RSHE curriculum map. Parents may request to view the map and the materials as described in section 12.

8. Teaching and learning

RSHE will be taught by appropriately trained staff, normally the class teacher, using methods that are interactive, inclusive and supportive rather than alarming. Teachers will:

- establish and revisit clear ground rules, including that nobody is asked to share personal experiences;
- use accurate, age-appropriate vocabulary and distinguish fact, opinion, belief and law;
- break knowledge and skills into manageable, well-sequenced units and provide opportunities to practise and apply learning;
- use Life Lessons narratives, peer discussion, visuals, dual coding, vocabulary support and scaffolded activities, adapting them to the class;
- provide alternative ways to participate, such as think-pair-share, journals, mini whiteboards, polls or an anonymous question box;
- challenge harmful language, prejudice, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, bullying and stereotypes without stigmatising pupils;
- avoid presenting contested views as settled fact and avoid language that reinforces gender stereotypes;
- focus on positive, healthy norms and the skills pupils can use to seek help and keep safe; and
- coordinate content with science, computing and other subjects to ensure coherence and avoid unhelpful repetition.

Classes will usually learn together. The school may use single-sex groups for a particular session where this creates a safer learning environment or meets an identified need. Any separation will be carefully considered, will not stigmatise pupils, and all pupils will receive consistent core knowledge, including learning about changes that may not happen to their own bodies.

9. Online safety and emerging issues

Online content is integrated through Relationships Education, Health Education and computing. By the end of primary, teaching will include respectful online behaviour; evaluating contacts and information; privacy and location settings; social-media age restrictions; the permanence and possible circulation of shared material; harmful content and contact; and how to report concerns.

If an emerging issue is affecting pupils - for example pressure to share naked images, exposure to pornography, harmful influencer content, an online scam or a new platform risk - the school may introduce carefully planned, age-appropriate protective teaching. The subject leader and DSL will check the content and materials. Parents will be informed in advance if this represents a material departure from the published curriculum, and materials will be available to view on request.

10. Safeguarding and confidentiality

RSHE can increase the likelihood that pupils disclose abuse, neglect, domestic abuse or other concerns. All staff must follow the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

- Pupils will be told that staff cannot promise to keep a safeguarding disclosure secret.
- Information will be handled sensitively and shared only with those who need it, normally the DSL or a deputy.
- Any concern about a pupil's welfare must be acted on immediately through the school's reporting process.
- Visitors must agree safeguarding and confidentiality arrangements before a session begins.
- Teaching will make clear that abuse is never the fault of the child and that pupils should keep seeking help until they are heard.
- Pupils will learn internal and external routes for advice and reporting, including what to do if they are not comfortable speaking to a particular adult.

11. Equality, inclusion and SEND

The school will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. RSHE will be taught in a way that does not discriminate against or harass pupils and that promotes dignity, equality and respect.

- Teaching will positively reflect a range of nurturing family structures, including single-parent, same-sex parent, blended, kinship, grandparent-led, adoptive and foster families, without stigmatising any child.
- Pupils will learn to respect people with different protected characteristics, backgrounds, beliefs and family circumstances.
- Teachers will distinguish factual and legal content from religious or other beliefs and will facilitate respectful discussion.
- Teaching about biological sex and gender reassignment will be factual, lawful and age appropriate; contested views will not be presented as settled fact, and all pupils will be treated with dignity.
- Activities and language will avoid reinforcing stereotypes, including stereotypes about boys, girls, masculinity and femininity.

Teaching will be accessible to pupils with SEND and will support preparation for adulthood. Staff will anticipate that some pupils with SEND may be more vulnerable to bullying, abuse, exploitation or harmful sexual behaviour. Reasonable adjustments may include pre-teaching vocabulary, visuals, concrete examples, repetition, smaller steps, adapted materials, additional processing time, alternative recording methods, structured discussion, social stories and additional adult support. Adaptation will preserve the intended knowledge and protective messages rather than lowering expectations.

The school will also consider the needs of pupils with EAL, pupils affected by trauma or bereavement, looked-after and previously looked-after children, young carers and any pupil for whom particular content may require additional preparation or follow-up.

12. Working with parents and access to materials

Parents and carers are the first educators of their children in relationships and health. The school will proactively engage them and be transparent about RSHE content and resources.

- Publish this policy on the school website and provide a free copy on request.
- Provide an annual year-group overview showing the topics and approximate timing of RSHE, including sensitive content.
- Consult parents when developing or reviewing the policy and consider feedback alongside pupil and staff views.
- Show a representative sample of planned materials and enable parents to view all RSHE curriculum materials on request, including Life Lessons materials.
- Explain the distinction between compulsory Relationships Education, Health Education and science, and any optional sex education.
- Offer reasonable opportunities to discuss concerns and support conversations at home.
- Inform parents in advance of any material departure from the published curriculum.

Provider copyright will affect how materials are viewed or copied but will not be used as a reason to refuse access. The school may use a secure parent portal, an in-school viewing or a supervised presentation and may require parents not to copy or redistribute copyrighted materials. The school will not enter into a provider agreement that prevents materials being shown to parents.

13. Right to request withdrawal

Current position
Because the school does not currently teach additional, non-statutory primary sex education, there is no optional sex-education element from which a pupil needs to be withdrawn.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education, Health Education or the national curriculum for science, including science content relating to puberty or reproduction.

If the school introduces optional primary sex education in future, parents will be informed in advance. A parent may request withdrawal from some or all of that optional content. Before granting the request, the headteacher will normally discuss the request with the parent and, where appropriate, the child, explain the nature and purpose of the teaching and any possible effects of withdrawal, and keep a record. For a primary pupil, the headteacher must grant the request for optional sex education. The school will provide appropriate, purposeful education during the withdrawn lesson.

14. Managing questions

Pupils' questions are welcomed because unanswered questions may lead pupils to unreliable or unsafe sources. Staff will respond honestly and sensitively, taking account of age, maturity, the planned curriculum, family context and safeguarding.

- Questions suitable for the whole class will be answered using factual, age-appropriate language.
- A question that is not suitable for class discussion may be acknowledged and followed up privately, with the subject leader, DSL or parent as appropriate.
- Anonymous question boxes may be used, but staff will not guarantee anonymity if a response raises a safeguarding concern.
- Staff will not answer by giving unnecessary sexual detail or personal information.
- Questions beyond the school's primary curriculum will be handled supportively, which may include signposting the pupil to a parent, trusted adult or appropriate support service.
- Where a question indicates possible abuse, risk or exposure to harmful content, safeguarding procedures will take priority.

15. External visitors and resources

External visitors may enrich RSHE but do not replace trained teachers or transfer responsibility away from the school. Before use, the subject leader will:

- check the visitor's credentials, purpose and suitability;
- review the lesson plan and all materials in advance for accuracy, balance, accessibility and age appropriateness;
- confirm how the session fits the school curriculum and this policy;
- ensure parents can view the materials;
- agree the teacher's role and ensure a member of school staff remains present;
- agree safeguarding, confidentiality and reporting arrangements with the visitor; and
- evaluate the session and any pupil or staff feedback.

The same quality-assurance principles apply to Life Lessons and any other commercial or freely available resource. Staff must use the current school-approved version and should not add unreviewed material from personal or online sources.

16. Staff training

Staff who teach or support RSHE will receive induction and ongoing training appropriate to their role. Training will include the September 2026 statutory requirements, use and adaptation of Life Lessons, subject knowledge, inclusive teaching, SEND, handling questions, online harms, safeguarding disclosures and parent transparency. The subject leader will identify refresher needs through monitoring, staff feedback, changes to guidance and emerging school or local issues.

17. Assessment, monitoring and evaluation

Assessment will focus on whether pupils understand and can apply key knowledge and protective skills; it will not assess personal beliefs, experiences or family circumstances. Teachers may use Life Lessons assessment tools, discussion, retrieval questions, scenario responses, quizzes, journals, work samples and pupil self-reflection.

The subject leader will monitor:

- coverage and progression against the statutory content and the school curriculum map;
- the quality and consistency of teaching and adaptation;
- pupil participation, vocabulary, understanding and ability to identify help-seeking routes;
- work samples and assessment information, including any groups who are not accessing or retaining learning;
- pupil, parent and staff voice;
- safeguarding patterns and local or emerging needs, without using lessons to investigate individual cases; and
- the suitability and currency of Life Lessons and supplementary materials.

Findings will inform curriculum changes, staff development, resource choices and governor reporting. Evaluation will consider intended and unintended impact and will avoid requiring pupils to disclose personal experiences.

18. Policy development, approval and review

This revision was produced by reviewing the previous school policy, the Department for Education statutory guidance for introduction from 1 September 2026, the school's curriculum rationale and Life Lessons implementation and staff-training materials.

Before approval, the school will consult parents and carers, gather meaningful pupil and staff feedback, and consider the needs of the school community. The governing board is responsible for approval.

The policy will be reviewed annually and sooner if statutory guidance, safeguarding guidance, the science or PSHE curriculum, school provision, Life Lessons materials or local need changes. Material changes will be communicated to staff and parents. The current approved version will be published on the school website and made available free of charge.

Appendix 1: End-of-primary curriculum summary

This summary is used for curriculum assurance. The detailed year-by-year mapping is held separately so that it can be updated without rewriting the policy. Pupils should know the following by the end of primary, taught in an age-appropriate sequence.

Area	End-of-primary entitlement
Families and people who care for me	Families can provide love, security and stability; safe and happy family life; diverse family structures; stable caring relationships; marriage and civil partnership; recognising unsafe family relationships and seeking help.
Caring friendships	Making and maintaining kind friendships; inclusion and loneliness; honesty, trust, generosity and support; repairing friendships; managing conflict without violence; recognising unhealthy friendships and seeking help.
Respectful, kind relationships	Balancing needs and preferences; healthy boundaries; assertive communication; kindness versus control; self-respect and identity; respect for difference; manners; bullying and bystander responsibility; stereotypes and prejudice; seeking help.
Online safety and awareness	Respectful online behaviour; resisting pressure to share information or images; evaluating online contacts and information; impersonation and harmful contact; minimum ages; privacy and location settings; permanence and circulation; upsetting content and support.
Being safe	Boundaries online and offline; privacy and unsafe secrets; body ownership; appropriate and inappropriate contact; responding to adults; recognising harmful or dangerous relationships; reporting abuse; correct vocabulary; persisting until heard.
General wellbeing	Physical activity, outdoors, helping others, rest, hobbies and community; emotional vocabulary and proportional responses; loneliness; bullying; change, loss and bereavement; when and how to seek support; early support for mental health.
Wellbeing online	Benefits and drawbacks of online connection; balancing online and in-person relationships; screen time; respectful behaviour; age restrictions; gaming, monetisation, scams, fraud and gambling-like harms; critical consumption; online abuse; data, privacy and consent; reporting concerns.
Physical health and fitness	Benefits of active lifestyles; building regular moderate and vigorous activity into routines; risks of inactivity; when and how to seek support.
Healthy eating	A healthy diet; calories and nutritional content; a healthy relationship with food; planning and preparing meals; effects of poor diet, obesity and tooth decay.

Area	End-of-primary entitlement
Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping	Facts and risks relating to legal and illegal substances, smoking, alcohol, drugs, vaping, nicotine addiction and nicotine products such as pouches.
Health protection and prevention	Early signs of illness; sun safety; age-appropriate sleep needs and habits, including screens in bedrooms; oral hygiene, fluoride toothpaste and cleaning between teeth; personal hygiene and germs; evidence about vaccination and immunisation.
Personal safety	Identifying hazards and reducing risks; fire safety; road, rail and level-crossing safety; water safety and the water safety code.
Basic first aid	Making a clear emergency call; reporting incidents rather than filming; basic responses to common injuries and ailments, including head injuries.
Developing bodies	Growth and the human lifecycle; puberty; correct names including penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum and nipples; privacy and boundaries; menstrual cycle and physical and emotional changes; preparation before periods may start.

Appendix 2: Parent access procedure

1. Parents may ask the school office or PSHE/RSHE subject leader to view the current curriculum map or materials.
2. The school will acknowledge the request and arrange reasonable access, normally through a secure portal, presentation or supervised viewing.
3. All materials used to teach RSHE will be available to view, including Life Lessons content and supplementary resources.
4. Where materials are copyrighted, the school may restrict copying, downloading or onward sharing and will identify the provider's authorship.
5. Copyright will not be used as a reason to refuse viewing.
6. Questions or concerns will be discussed with the subject leader or a senior leader. The complaints policy remains available if concerns are not resolved.

Appendix 3: Key terminology and school position

Term	Explanation
RSHE	Relationships, Sex and Health Education - used as a collective label in this policy.
RHE	Relationships and Health Education - the compulsory primary elements.
RSE	Relationships and Sex Education. In primary, Relationships Education is compulsory; additional sex education is not compulsory.
PSHE	Personal, Social, Health and Economic education. Life Lessons is the school's main PSHE scheme and is one vehicle for RSHE.

Term	Explanation
Puberty	A stage of the human lifecycle taught through Health Education and science; it is not optional sex education.
Anatomical vocabulary	Correct names for body parts used to support health, boundaries and safeguarding; this does not by itself constitute sex education.
School position	No additional, non-statutory primary sex education beyond the science curriculum is currently taught.

Reference documents

- Department for Education: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education - statutory guidance for introduction from 1 September 2026
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current version)
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- Equality Act 2010
- Life Lessons
- Pear Tree Community Junior School PSHE with Life Lessons staff-training materials, September 2026
- Pear Tree Community Junior School Curriculum 2026-2027