Relationships and RSE Policy

Policy updated: 2 November 2026 — for governing board approval

Review date: November 2027, or earlier if requirements change

Executive Head Teacher: Anthony David

Chair of Governors: Rebecca Shilling

- **Statement of intent**

At St Mary's School, we understand that pupils must be provided with an education that prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. A key part of this relates to relationships education, which must be delivered to every primary-aged pupil.

Relationships education focuses on giving pupils the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships, and to build their self-efficacy.

This policy sets out how relationships education, health education and primary sex education are planned and taught within PSHE. It distinguishes statutory content from sex education beyond the national curriculum for science and should be read alongside our PSHE policy.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at St Mary's is taught within our Church of England ethos. Loving, stable and caring relationships underpin our teaching. Our values of Nurture, Aspire, Compassion and Empower help children develop self-respect, empathy and responsibility. Faith perspectives are identified as beliefs, while scientific information and the law are taught accurately.

Children should learn that God is the Creator of all and that every human being has a unique place in that creation.

Our current PSHE Curriculum Map (Appendix 1) sets the sequence for Years 1–6. Autumn focuses on Relationships, spring on Living in the Wider World, and summer on Health and Wellbeing. Each half term has a named unit; knowledge and skills are revisited with increasing depth. Relationships and safety are taught throughout the year, rather than only in the summer term.

Our curriculum supports the school's vision:

Kind people, confident learners, a brighter tomorrow. Every child is encouraged to let their light shine.

PSHE develops the skills, attitudes, values and behaviour which enable pupils to:

- Have a sense of purpose
- Value self and others
- Form relationships
- Make and act on informed decisions
- Communicate effectively
- Work with others
- Respond to challenge
- Be an active partner in their own learning
- Be active citizens within the local community
- Explore issues related to living in a democratic society
- Become healthy and fulfilled individuals

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2002, sections 78 and 80A, and Education Act 1996, section 403.
- Children and Social Work Act 2017, sections 34 and 35.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019.
- Equality Act 2010, including the public sector equality duty; Children Act 1989; Children Act 2004; and Children and Families Act 2014.
- DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance, published July 2025 and in force from 1 September 2026.
- National curriculum in England: science programmes of study for key stages 1 and 2; and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- DfE Keeping children safe in education 2026 and the school's current safeguarding procedures. References to guidance mean the version currently in force.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the Christian ethos of the school is maintained and developed through the curriculum
- Ensuring all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes.
- Ensuring the curriculum is well led, effectively managed and well planned.
- Evaluating the quality of provision through regular and effective self-evaluation.
- Ensuring teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND.
- Providing clear information on content, resources and withdrawal from primary sex education beyond statutory science.
- Making sure the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

2.2. The Executive Headteacher and Head of School are responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring the Christian ethos of the school is maintained and developed through RSE and across the curriculum.
- Ensuring staff are suitably trained to deliver the subjects.
- Ensuring that parents are fully informed of this policy.
- Granting parental requests to withdraw from primary sex education beyond statutory science, while explaining which content remains compulsory.
- Discussing requests for withdrawal with parents.
- Organising alternative education for pupils, where necessary, that is appropriate and purposeful.
- Reporting to the governing board on the effectiveness of this policy.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.

2.3. The RSE subject leader is responsible for:

- Overseeing the delivery of RSE

- Ensuring the Christian ethos of the school is maintained and developed through teaching and learning in RSE.
- Ensuring the subjects are age-appropriate and high-quality.
- Ensuring teachers are provided with adequate resources to support teaching of the subjects.
- Ensuring the school meets its statutory requirements in relation to the RSE curriculum.
- Ensuring the RSE curriculum is inclusive and accessible for all pupils.
- Working with other subject leaders to ensure the RSE curriculum complements, but does not duplicate, the content covered in the national curriculum.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the subjects and providing reports to the headteacher.

2.4. Teachers are responsible for:

- Delivering a high-quality and age-appropriate RSE curriculum in line with statutory requirements.
- Maintaining the Christian ethos of the school through teaching and learning in RSE and across the curriculum.
- Using a variety of teaching methods and resources to provide an engaging curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils.
- Ensuring they do not express personal views or beliefs when delivering the programme.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE.
- Responding to any safeguarding concerns in line with the Child Protection Policy.
- Acting in accordance with planning, monitoring and assessment requirements for the subjects.
- Liaising with the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion (SENDCO) to identify and respond to individual needs of pupils with SEND.
- Working with the RSE subject leader to evaluate the quality of provision.

2.5. The Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion (SENDCO) is responsible for:

- Advising teaching staff how best to identify and support pupils' individual needs.
- Advising staff on the use of TAs in order to meet pupils' individual needs.

3. Organisation of the curriculum

3.1. Relationships education and health education are compulsory for primary pupils. Sex education beyond statutory science is not compulsory, but St Mary's provides an age-appropriate programme to prepare pupils for secondary school.

3.2. Relationships education teaches children about family, friendship, kindness, boundaries and safety, including online. Health education includes wellbeing, body knowledge and puberty. Primary sex education beyond science explains human conception and birth; the planned sequence and withdrawal boundary are set out in Appendix 2.

3.3. Class teachers deliver this learning within PSHE, supported by science and the wider curriculum. The PSHE/RSE subject leader coordinates planning. Any visiting

specialist supplements teaching; the school retains responsibility for content, supervision and safeguarding.

3.4. Planning has regard to the revised DfE statutory guidance in force from September 2026. The subject leader maintains lesson-level coverage of the required primary outcomes; unit titles alone do not demonstrate full coverage.

3.5. This updated policy uses the supplied St Mary's curriculum map. Leaders will consult parents and seek staff and pupil views before governing board approval. Approval and consultation dates will be recorded by the school.

3.6. Any parent, teacher or pupil wishing to provide feedback about the curriculum can do so at any time during the academic year by contacting the Head of School

4. Consultation with parents

4.1. The school understands the important role parents play in enhancing their children's understanding of relationships, sex and health. Similarly, we also understand how important parents' views are in shaping the curriculum.

4.2. Parents are provided with the following information:

- The content of the RSE curriculum and that it maintains the Christian ethos of the school
- The delivery of the RSE curriculum, including what is taught in each year group
- The distinction between compulsory relationships, health and science teaching and the right to withdraw from other primary sex education.
- The resources that will be used to support the curriculum

4.3. The school aims to build positive relationships with parents by inviting them into school to discuss what will be taught, address any concerns and help parents in managing conversations with their children on the issues covered by the curriculum.

Parental access and withdrawal

The school publishes this policy and provides a free copy on request. Parents receive advance information about sex education lessons and may view all teaching materials, including external resources, through arrangements made with the Head of School. Copyright restrictions affect how resources are shared, but will not be used to refuse access.

Parents may request withdrawal from any primary sex education beyond statutory science. Requests should be made to the Executive Headteacher or Head of School. Leaders will discuss the request, explain the lesson content and record the arrangements, but must grant the request. Pupils receive appropriate, purposeful alternative learning without stigma. There is no right to withdraw from relationships education, health education, puberty teaching or statutory science.

Inclusive and safe teaching

Every pupil and family is treated with dignity. Examples include single-parent families, same-sex parents, grandparents and kinship carers, adoptive and foster families. Teachers

challenge bullying, sexism, homophobia and other prejudice, without stereotyping children. Teaching reflects our Christian ethos and meets equality duties. Staff distinguish factual information and law from beliefs and contested views; they do not present as fact that everyone has a gender identity or encourage children to question their gender.

Teachers adapt vocabulary, pace, repetition and resources for pupils with SEND, working with the SENDCO and families where appropriate. Visual supports and rehearsal help pupils communicate boundaries and seek help. Adjustments enable access to essential protective knowledge and do not routinely remove pupils from it. Staff consider individual experiences, including bereavement, trauma and care experience, when choosing examples.

Lessons use agreed ground rules, distancing through fictional examples and an anonymous question route. Pupils are not asked to disclose personal experiences and may pass on a discussion. Teachers answer accurately at the appropriate developmental level. Questions beyond the planned primary programme, or concerning sex education from which a child has been withdrawn, are handled privately with the subject leader and parents where appropriate; safeguarding needs take priority.

Staff do not promise confidentiality. They listen calmly to disclosures, avoid leading questions, make an accurate record and report concerns immediately to the designated safeguarding lead under the Child Protection Policy. Abuse is never the child's fault. Staff do not investigate disclosures themselves; statutory reporting and referral duties continue to apply.

The subject leader checks resources and any visiting provider in advance for accuracy, suitability, accessibility and safeguarding arrangements. A teacher remains responsible for the class. Providers must follow this policy and the school's reporting procedures. Parents are informed of significant changes to planned content in advance.

5. Relationships education overview

Families and people who care for me

5.1. By the end of primary school, pupils will know:

- That families are important for them growing up because they can give love, security and stability.
- The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives.
- That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.
- That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up.
- That marriage and civil partnerships are legally recognised commitments between two people, intended to be lifelong.
- How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.

Caring friendships

5.2. By the end of primary school, pupils will know:

- How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.
- The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences, and support with problems and difficulties.
- That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded.
- That most friendships have ups and downs, but that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right.
- How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust.
- How to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable.
- How to manage conflict.
- How to manage different situations and how to seek help from others if needed.

Respectful and kind relationships

5.3. By the end of primary school, pupils will know:

- The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), make different choices, or have different preferences or beliefs.
- Links between respectful relationships and the Christian ethos.
- Which practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.
- The conventions of courtesy and manners.
- The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness.
- That in school and wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority.
- About the different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying to an adult, and how to seek help.
- What a stereotype is, and how they can be unfair, negative or destructive.
- The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.

Online safety and awareness

5.4. By the end of primary school, pupils will know:

- That people sometimes behave differently online, including pretending to be someone they are not.
- That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online, even when we are anonymous.
- The rules and principles for keeping safe online.

- How to recognise harmful content and contact online, and how to report these.
- How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information.
- The risks associated with people they have never met.
- How information and data is shared and used online.
- Pupils learn to question AI-generated content and seek adult help with misleading or harmful images and messages. Digital Wellbeing also addresses privacy, location settings, pressure to share images, gaming purchases, scams and financial risks at an age-appropriate level.

Being safe

5.5. By the end of primary school, pupils will know:

- What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others – including in a digital context.
- About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults.
- That it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.
- That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact.
- How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter, including online, who they do not know.
- How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult.
- How to ask for advice or help for themselves and others, and to keep trying until they are heard.
- How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
- Where to seek advice, for example, from their family, their school and other sources.

Health education and developing bodies

Health teaching is coordinated with science, PE, computing and wider PSHE. It includes emotional wellbeing, loneliness, loss and seeking support; exercise, food, sleep and hygiene; dental health, sun safety, illness and vaccination; medicines, alcohol, smoking, vaping and other harmful substances; road, rail, fire and water safety; and basic first aid, including calling emergency services. Lesson plans specify when each outcome is taught and assessed.

Children learn accurate body vocabulary, including penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum and nipples, alongside privacy and body boundaries. Puberty and menstruation are taught before they are likely to be experienced, with preparation in lower KS2 and consolidation in Years 4–6. Teaching is for all pupils, with sensitive practical support and access to period products. Year 6 "consent" concerns everyday permission, personal boundaries and respect; it is not a programme about sexual activity.

Pupils practise communicating needs, respecting others' boundaries, resolving conflict and recognising controlling behaviour. They learn that loneliness is common, how to get help, and that kindness does not require accepting unsafe or unwanted contact.

6. Relationships education per year group

6.1. The school always considers the age and development of pupils when deciding what will be taught in each year group.

6.2. The school plans a progressive curriculum in which topics are built upon prior knowledge taught in previous years as pupils progress through school, with a view to providing a smooth transition to secondary school.

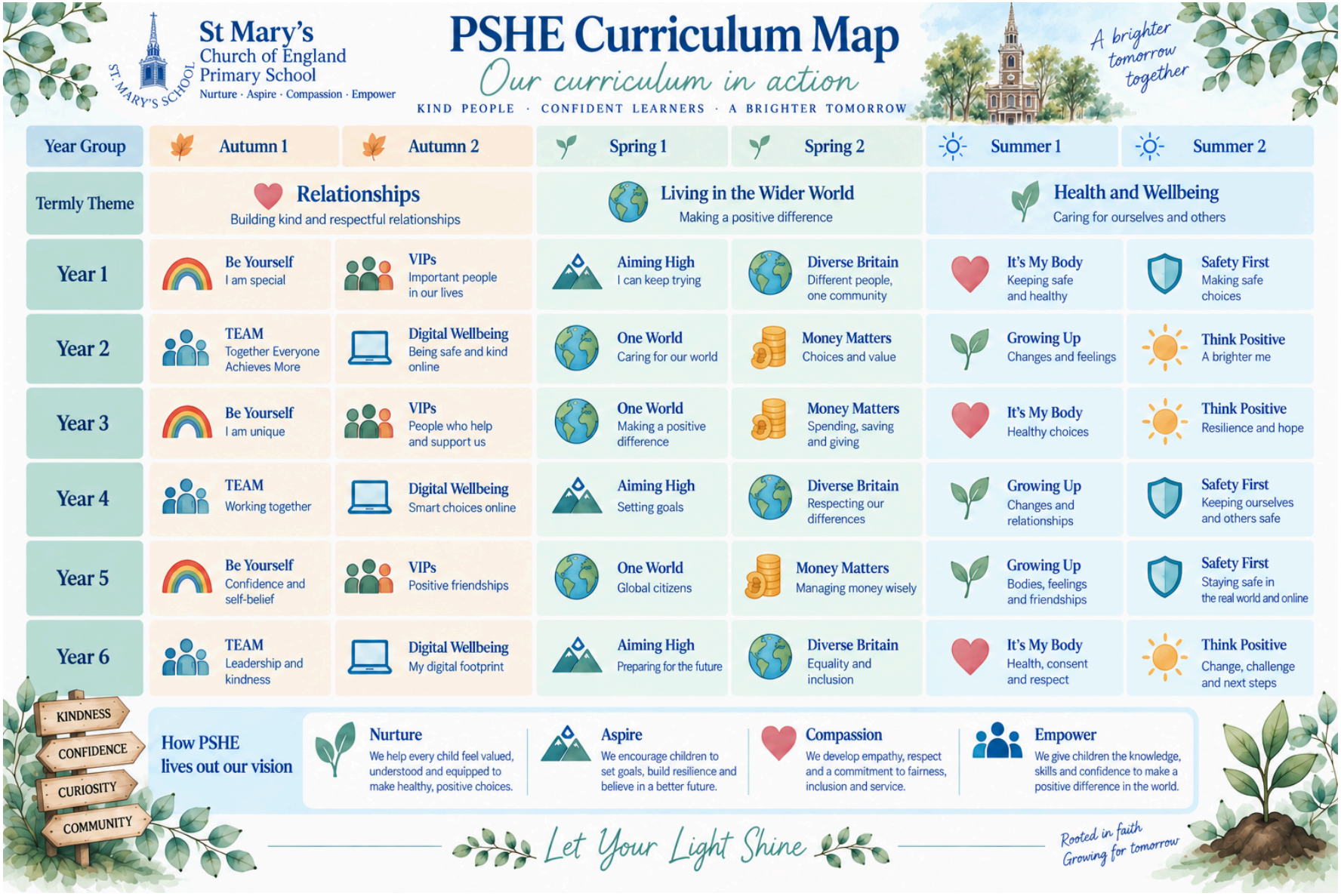
Wellbeing online

6.3. By the end of primary school, pupils will know:

- That for most people, the internet is an integral part of life and has many benefits.
- About the benefits of rationing time spent online.
- The risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices.
- The impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing.
- How to consider the effect of their online actions on others.
- How to recognise and display respectful behaviour online.
- The importance of keeping personal information private.
- Why some social media, some computer games and online gaming are age-restricted.
- That the internet can also be a negative place where online abuse, trolling, bullying and harassment can take place, which can have a negative impact on mental health.
- How to consider online information critically, including how search results, advertising and recommendations are selected and targeted.
- Where and how to report concerns and get support with issues online.

Appendix 1: St Mary's PSHE Curriculum Map

The supplied whole-school sequence governs the half-termly units. Relationships, health and safeguarding knowledge is revisited across units and through wider school life.



Appendix 2: Curriculum delivery and the sex education boundary

The following detail supplements the curriculum map. Body safety and puberty are statutory health and relationships content. Human conception and birth beyond statutory science are identified separately so parents can exercise their withdrawal right.

Year 1

Be Yourself; VIPs; Aiming High; Diverse Britain; It's My Body; Safety First. Teaching establishes identity, caring adults, family diversity, friendship, private body parts, everyday permission and getting help.

Year 2

TEAM; Digital Wellbeing; One World; Money Matters; Growing Up; Think Positive. Teaching develops cooperation, online kindness, life stages, changes and feelings, body privacy and trusted support.

Year 3

Be Yourself; VIPs; One World; Money Matters; It's My Body; Think Positive. Teaching develops uniqueness, supportive relationships, healthy choices and resilience. Teachers begin preparation for puberty, including menstruation, early enough to meet pupils' needs.

Year 4

TEAM; Digital Wellbeing; Aiming High; Diverse Britain; Growing Up; Safety First. Teaching covers changing bodies and feelings, puberty and menstruation, respectful relationships, stereotypes, online boundaries and practical safety.

Year 5

Be Yourself; VIPs; One World; Money Matters; Growing Up; Safety First. Teaching consolidates puberty, hygiene and emotional change, positive friendships, pressure and safety online and offline. Within Growing Up in Summer 1, separately identified sex education lessons explain human conception, pregnancy and birth in an age-appropriate way; parents may withdraw from those lessons beyond science.

Year 6

TEAM; Digital Wellbeing; Aiming High; Diverse Britain; It's My Body; Think Positive. Teaching builds leadership, digital judgement, equality, bodily autonomy, everyday consent and transition. Puberty is revisited; any necessary consolidation of conception and birth beyond science is separately notified to parents and remains subject to withdrawal.

Science curriculum

Key Stage 1 science includes identifying basic body parts and the senses, and understanding that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults. Key Stage 2 includes reproduction in some plants and animals and changes as humans develop to old age, including puberty. Statutory science cannot be withdrawn from. The school does not reclassify optional PSHE sex education as science to avoid withdrawal rights.

Appendix 3: Assessment monitoring and review

Teachers establish prior knowledge through discussion, scenarios, quizzes and draw-and-write activities. They revisit learning to assess what pupils know, can explain and can apply, without judging personal beliefs or requiring private disclosures. Pupils may reflect on their learning using accessible methods.

The PSHE/RSE subject leader reviews planning, lesson coverage, resources, pupil feedback and assessment with senior leaders. Monitoring checks progression, SEND access, safeguarding knowledge and the complete statutory outcomes, including content taught outside the named PSHE units. Findings inform staff training and reports to governors.

The governing board approves this policy following consultation. Leaders review it annually, or sooner following changes to guidance, curriculum provision or identified needs. The school records the approval date on adoption and publishes the approved version. Concerns are raised with the class teacher or Head of School and then through the school's complaints procedure if unresolved.

Key reference documents

DfE statutory RSHE guidance, in force from 1 September 2026:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education

DfE Keeping children safe in education 2026:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

National curriculum science programmes of study:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-science-programmes-of-study