

Elysian

Relationships and Sex Education Policy



Reviewed: September 2026

Consultation with parents / carers: To be completed following revision

Date to review: August 2027

Scope

This policy applies to all Elysian sites, encompassing Elysian Providing Animal Assisted Therapy and Learning. It applies to the teaching of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and relevant Health Education content delivered to pupils at Elysian.

Commitment

Elysian is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. High-quality RSE plays a crucial role in preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and challenges of adult life. Our approach is child-centred, safeguarding-led, inclusive and responsive to the developmental and communication needs of our pupils.

Statutory Framework

This policy has been developed having regard to the Department for Education's Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance, in force from 1 September 2026, and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026. It also reflects the Equality Act 2010 and, as applicable to Elysian, the Independent School Standards and associated guidance.

Elysian will keep its RSE curriculum and policy under review so that teaching remains accurate, balanced, age and developmentally appropriate, accessible to pupils with SEND, and consistent with current safeguarding requirements. Where statutory guidance states that schools should or should not take a particular approach, Elysian will have regard to that guidance and will record the rationale for any departure.

What is Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)?

RSE provides young people with the knowledge, skills and values to understand and navigate relationships, respect themselves and others, and make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing. At Elysian, RSE helps pupils develop resilience, self-worth and empathy, equipping them to recognise risks, seek support, communicate boundaries and build positive, respectful relationships throughout their lives.

Goals of RSE

The aims of RSE at Elysian are to provide accurate, age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate knowledge; develop skills for communication, decision-making and self-care; and promote positive values and attitudes such as respect, empathy, inclusion and responsibility. Pupils are taught how to recognise risks, protect themselves and others from harm, and seek help when needed, ensuring that they can make safe, informed and responsible choices.

Teaching uses correct and appropriate terminology, including proper anatomical names for body parts and genitalia where relevant. Content is carefully sequenced and adapted so that pupils can build secure knowledge at a pace appropriate to their individual needs.

Rationale for RSE at Elysian

RSE is vital to safeguarding children, reducing harmful behaviours and providing a safe, nurturing environment in which young people can explore relationships, values, identity, health and future decisions. Our curriculum is guided by the statutory RSE and Health Education requirements in force from September 2026 and is adapted to meet the needs of young people with complex SEND.

The unique farm environment and animal-assisted learning at Elysian provide meaningful contexts for discussing themes such as trust, consent, boundaries, families, responsibility, care and reproduction. This approach makes learning more accessible, relevant and engaging while ensuring that human relationships and safeguarding concepts are taught explicitly and accurately.

Guiding Principles

Our RSE programme is built on the principles of safeguarding, transparency, inclusion, factual accuracy, positive healthy norms and progressive learning. We engage pupils in shaping learning where appropriate and are transparent with parents and carers about curriculum content and resources.

Teaching is balanced and does not present contested views as established fact. Pupils are supported to express respectful views and ask questions in a safe environment. When teaching about sex and protected characteristics, staff teach the relevant legal and factual information, including biological sex and gender reassignment as a protected characteristic, in an age and developmentally appropriate way. Teaching does not reinforce harmful gender stereotypes or suggest that social transition is a simple solution to distress or discomfort.

RSE is embedded within a whole-school approach and is closely linked with safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying, online safety, SEND, equality, mental health and wellbeing, mobile phone and curriculum/SMSC arrangements.

Delivery of the RSE Programme

RSE is delivered through group lessons, 1:1 sessions, paired activities and practical experiences, creating a safe and non-judgmental environment for learning. It is embedded within PSHE and science, with content carefully tailored to pupils' chronological age, developmental stage, communication profile and prior learning.

Lessons are adapted to ensure accessibility for pupils with SEND and vulnerable learners. Elysian recognises that some pupils may have gaps in earlier RSE learning; staff therefore revisit foundational primary content before moving to more complex secondary content where this is necessary.

Coverage and progress are tracked using the Seesaw app, supporting consistency across sites. Staff receive regular professional training and CPD in RSE, safeguarding, SEND, online safety and trauma-informed practice. Staff delivering RSE understand that teaching may prompt disclosures and follow Elysian's safeguarding procedures without delay.

Use of Resources and External Providers

Elysian may use external resources, speakers or specialist organisations where these enhance, rather than replace, teaching by appropriately trained staff. Before use, Elysian will carry out proportionate due diligence to ensure that the provider, speaker and materials are suitable, accurate, balanced, age and developmentally appropriate, accessible for pupils with SEND and consistent with Elysian's safeguarding duties, published RSE policy and legal obligations.

Materials are reviewed in advance. External providers are briefed on safeguarding, confidentiality and disclosure procedures, and an Elysian member of staff will normally remain present. Resources that reinforce harmful stereotypes, present contested views as fact, or are unsuitable for the needs of pupils will not be used. Parents and carers may request to see resources used for RSE teaching.

Parental Involvement and Consultation

Parents and carers are actively involved in Elysian's approach to RSE. They are consulted when this policy is developed or revised, provided with information about the curriculum and given opportunities to view teaching materials. Elysian will retain evidence of consultation and the consideration given to parental feedback.

Staff provide guidance where helpful so that parents and carers can continue appropriate discussions at home. Consultation supports transparency and shared understanding; responsibility for determining the curriculum and ensuring statutory compliance remains with Elysian.

Parents' Right to Request Withdrawal

Parents and carers have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from some or all sex education delivered as part of RSE. There is no right to withdraw a pupil from Relationships Education, Health

Education or content taught as part of the science curriculum, including relevant science content on puberty or sexual reproduction.

Before granting a request for withdrawal from sex education, the Head of Education will discuss the request with the parent or carer and, where appropriate, the pupil, so that the nature and purpose of the curriculum, the pupil's needs and any potential effects of withdrawal can be considered. The discussion and decision will be recorded.

Where primary-age sex education is provided beyond the science curriculum, a parental request for withdrawal will be granted. In secondary education, a request will normally be granted, although it may be refused in exceptional circumstances, for example where there are safeguarding concerns or a pupil has a specific vulnerability.

From three terms before the pupil turns 16, the pupil may choose to opt back into sex education even where a parent or carer has previously requested withdrawal. Elysian will ensure that pupils know about this right. Where a pupil is withdrawn, Elysian will provide appropriate and purposeful alternative education.

Confidentiality and Safeguarding

RSE is delivered in a safe environment where pupils are encouraged to ask questions and express their views respectfully. Staff respond honestly and appropriately, taking account of pupils' age, developmental stage, communication needs and maturity, and may defer an answer where this is necessary to ensure accuracy or safeguarding.

Staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality. Any disclosure or concern indicating that a pupil may be at risk of harm is acted upon in accordance with Elysian's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and KCSIE 2026 and is referred promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy.

All staff are expected to read KCSIE 2026 Part One in full and to follow Elysian's safeguarding policies and procedures. RSE teaching reinforces that safeguarding risks can occur both offline and online and that pupils should seek help when something feels unsafe, coercive, exploitative or harmful.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

RSE at Elysian is inclusive and reflects the diversity of our school community. Teaching represents a wide range of family structures and circumstances positively and promotes equality, dignity, mutual respect and tolerance. Pupils are taught relevant factual and legal information about protected characteristics in an age and developmentally appropriate way.

Lessons are adapted to ensure accessibility for pupils with SEND and for pupils who may be especially vulnerable. Staff take account of communication, cognition, sensory needs, trauma, prior learning and individual safeguarding needs while maintaining high expectations for every pupil's entitlement to essential safety and relationship education.

Curriculum Content

By the End of Primary

By the end of primary education, pupils should understand that families provide love, care and stability, even though families may look different, and understand the legal significance of marriage and civil partnership in an age-appropriate way. They learn how to make and sustain friendships, resolve conflict, recognise bullying and prejudice, understand respect and boundaries, and know when and how to seek help.

Online safety is introduced early. Pupils learn about privacy, age restrictions, risks from strangers, scams and unsafe contact, the permanence and consequences of sharing content, and how online information may be inaccurate or misleading. Teaching develops early understanding of misinformation, disinformation and harmful or manipulative online content.

Pupils are taught about body ownership, consent and personal boundaries using correct anatomical terminology, including appropriate names for genitalia. They learn that their body belongs to them, how to identify unsafe or unwanted touch, and how to tell a trusted adult when something feels wrong.

Health and safety learning includes age-appropriate information about nicotine and vaping, alongside wider learning about healthy choices. Personal safety teaching also includes appropriate learning about staying safe around roads, water and railways.

At Elysian, we recognise that some young people may have missed significant aspects of RSE during their primary years. Our curriculum therefore revisits primary content where necessary, ensuring secure foundations before pupils progress to more complex topics.

By the End of Secondary

By the end of secondary education, pupils should have the knowledge and skills to develop safe, healthy and respectful relationships of all kinds. They learn about families, commitment, parenting and caring responsibilities; the myths surrounding 'common-law marriage'; consent; power dynamics; kindness; respect; and how to recognise and challenge prejudice, stereotyping and misogyny.

Pupils are taught factual and legal information about biological sex and protected characteristics, including gender reassignment. Teaching is respectful and balanced, does not reinforce harmful stereotypes and does not present contested views as established fact.

Pupils learn how to stay safe online, including the risks associated with self-generated intimate images and videos, financially motivated sexual extortion, scams, grooming, harmful online subcultures, pornography, AI technologies and AI-generated deepfakes. They learn how misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories can affect safety, wellbeing and decision-making, and how to assess information critically.

Where relevant to pupils' age and developmental understanding, teaching includes appropriate legal literacy, including the Online Safety Act, the age of criminal responsibility and the concept of Gillick competence.

In relation to personal safety, pupils develop the skills to communicate and respect boundaries and understand the law around consent, sexual assault, rape, harassment, coercion and exploitation. They learn to recognise harmful sexual behaviour and offences including upskirting, strangulation and suffocation, virginity testing, hymenoplasty, FGM and forced marriage.

Pupils learn about domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, and that children can be victims of domestic abuse in their own right. They are supported to recognise grooming, child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and financial exploitation and to understand that a child who has been coerced or exploited may also become involved with the criminal justice system.

Pupils learn about intimate and sexual relationships and sexual health through accurate and impartial information about pregnancy choices, contraception, safer sex, sexually transmitted infections and HIV, including prevention and treatment options. Teaching addresses the effects of alcohol, drugs, nicotine and vaping on health and decision-making and signposts pupils to appropriate confidential support and healthcare services.

Elysian acknowledges that some pupils may not have had consistent access to RSE during their earlier education. The secondary programme therefore revisits and consolidates foundational content wherever necessary so that pupils can access more advanced learning safely and confidently.

Online Safety, AI and Digital Relationships

Online safety is woven throughout the RSE curriculum rather than treated as a standalone topic. Pupils are taught how technology can support positive relationships but can also facilitate bullying, harassment, grooming, coercion, exploitation, fraud and sexual harm.

Teaching includes age-appropriate learning about generative AI, manipulated or synthetic content, deepfakes and the risks associated with creating, requesting, sharing or possessing intimate images. Pupils are taught where to seek help and how to report harmful online experiences. This content is aligned with Elysian's Online Safety, Safeguarding and Mobile Phone arrangements.

Sensitive and Contested Topics

Staff approach sensitive and contested topics carefully, factually and respectfully. Teaching distinguishes between legal or scientific facts and matters on which different views may be held. Staff do not seek to influence pupils towards a particular contested viewpoint and ensure that discussion remains suitable for pupils' age, developmental stage and safeguarding needs.

Questions from pupils are treated respectfully. Where an immediate answer would be inappropriate, beyond the planned curriculum, factually uncertain or potentially unsafe, staff may defer the question and seek guidance from an appropriate senior leader or the DSL before responding.

Safeguarding Links

This policy works alongside Elysian's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy, Equality and Inclusion Policy, SEND arrangements, Mental Health and Wellbeing arrangements, Mobile Phone Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and relevant curriculum/SMSC and Fundamental British Values arrangements.

Where RSE identifies or prompts a safeguarding concern, safeguarding procedures take priority. Curriculum content and terminology will be reviewed when safeguarding guidance changes so that RSE remains consistent with KCSIE and wider Elysian practice.

Monitoring, Quality Assurance and Review

The delivery of RSE is monitored through lesson observations, planning reviews, curriculum mapping, pupil voice and review of learning evidence. Impact is evaluated through feedback, safeguarding information, evidence of progress in PSHE/RSE learning and consideration of whether pupils can apply learning to real-life situations.

External providers and resources are reviewed periodically for continued suitability. Staff training needs are identified through monitoring and changes to statutory guidance.

This policy is reviewed at least annually by the Heads of Education and sooner where statutory guidance or safeguarding requirements change. Parents and carers will be consulted when the policy is developed or revised. The policy will be published on the Elysian website and made available free of charge to anyone who requests a copy.

Key Guidance

- Department for Education: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education - statutory guidance, in force from 1 September 2026.
- Department for Education: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Independent School Standards and associated guidance, where applicable.
- Elysian Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and associated whole-school policies.