



**Longcause Community
Special School**

Relationships and Education, and Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Signature of Head:	Faye James
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Signature of Chair of Governors:	Fred Jenkins
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Rationale

From September 2026, the updated statutory guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), and Health Education requires all schools in England to deliver a comprehensive RSHE curriculum. Relationships Education remains compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education, while Relationships and Sex Education is compulsory for those receiving secondary education. Health Education continues to be mandatory across all phases. In response, Longcause School has developed a bespoke RSHE curriculum known as our **Learning for Life Curriculum (LLfL)**. This whole-school programme integrates statutory RSHE content with Life Skills and Online Safety, ensuring accessibility and relevance for our pupils from KS1-KS4. RSHE is taught as part of this integrated framework, with clear priorities given to safeguarding, emotional wellbeing, and inclusive education. Within this policy, RSHE content and curriculum refers to both the RSHE, Life Skills and Online Safety curriculums.

At Longcause, we deliver RSHE as outlined in this policy and in alignment with our LLfL Curriculum Intent Statement (please see LLfL Curriculum Intent Statement for further information).

Key Considerations for RSHE Delivery at Longcause School

In accordance with the RSHE 2026 statutory framework, Longcause School ensures that Relationships, Sex and Health Education is delivered in a way that is legally compliant, developmentally appropriate, and emotionally safe for all pupils.

- **Statutory and Legal Compliance:** RSHE is delivered in line with the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2026. We also uphold the principles of the Children Act, including the child's right to confidentiality and protection from harm, and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025).
- **Pupil-Centred Planning:** Our curriculum is tailored to meet the diverse needs of our pupils. We recognise and respond to the differing rates of development across our pupil cohort.
- **Family Partnership and Consultation:** Parents and carers are actively involved in shaping RSHE provision through structured consultation processes, including questionnaires, and ongoing dialogue. Individual concerns are addressed with sensitivity and, where appropriate, through referrals to external agencies or support networks.
- **Developmentally Appropriate Timing:** Sex Education is introduced at a stage that is developmentally appropriate for each pupil. Where relevant, content may be delivered earlier to ensure pupils are informed before the onset of puberty, emerging sexual feelings, or the formation of safe, romantic and sexual relationships. Where pupils are physically entering puberty or showing signs of sexual development, RSHE content may be introduced

earlier—even if their cognitive or emotional readiness differs—to ensure they receive timely, protective information in a way that is accessible and supportive.

- **Pupil Voice and Agency:** Pupils are invited to share their views prior to the delivery of RSE topics. Their input informs planning and ensures that content is relevant, supportive and accessible. This approach fosters autonomy and emotional safety.
- **Individualised Support:** RSHE content and delivery within all curriculums are adapted to meet individual needs. This includes the use of visual supports, scaffolded language, and differentiated resources to ensure accessibility and understanding for all learners.

Specific Safeguarding and Confidentiality Considerations

In line with the RSHE 2026 statutory framework and Longcause’s safeguarding policies, the following principles guide our approach to confidentiality and child protection within RSHE:

- **Confidentiality** Staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality in RSHE discussions. Pupils are supported to understand that if a safeguarding concern arises, staff will not break a confidence without first informing the pupil and explaining the next steps in a developmentally appropriate and emotionally safe way.
- **Child Protection Procedures** Any disclosures or concerns relating to pupil safety—including sexual activity, exploitation, or emotional harm—must be recorded and referred to the Safeguarding team. All actions follow Longcause’s Child Protection procedures, which prioritise the welfare and best interests of the child. Safeguarding procedures at Longcause Community Special School are fully compliant with the statutory guidance outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025.
- **Sexual Activity Disclosures** If a pupil under the age of 16 discloses that they are engaging in or considering sexual activity, staff should, wherever possible, encourage the pupil to speak with a parent or carer. Safeguarding protocols must be followed, and appropriate health professionals or support services may be involved to provide guidance and care.
- **Health Professionals and Confidentiality** External health professionals working one-to-one with pupils outside the classroom setting are bound by their own professional codes of conduct regarding confidentiality. These professionals operate within safeguarding frameworks and liaise with school staff as appropriate.

This approach ensures that RSHE is delivered in a way that protects pupils, respects their rights, and fosters trust, openness, and emotional safety.

Health Education- Primary

The RSHE 2026 framework sets out clear expectations for teaching physical health and mental wellbeing. At Longcause, our aim is to provide pupils with accurate, practical information to help them make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing as they grow. Health Education remains compulsory for all pupils and **families do not have the right to withdraw their child from any elements of health education.**

Mental wellbeing remains a central focus. Pupils are supported to understand and manage their emotions through our Positive Relationships Curriculum, which builds self-awareness, awareness of others and strategies for seeking help.

Healthy eating and physical activity are taught across the curriculum, with key knowledge and skills delivered through Catering, PE, and Science. This ensures pupils learn how to care for their bodies, make healthy choices, and understand the impact of lifestyle on long-term health.

In accordance with the National Curriculum for Science and RSHE 2026 guidance, pupils are taught the main external parts of the body and how the human body grows from birth to old age. Puberty—including menstruation—is introduced through Health Education and, wherever possible, taught before onset to ensure pupils are prepared for the changes they may experience.

Menstruation will be introduced to girls from Year 4 onwards, ensuring they are prepared before the onset of physical changes. Boys will be taught about menstruation and the changes experienced by the opposite gender once they reach a stage of cognitive readiness to understand the physical processes involved. All pupils will learn about the changes that occur during puberty, including those experienced by the opposite gender, as part of a broader understanding of human development.

Aims:

- **Developing bodies:** The human lifecycle and the changes that happen externally to their bodies during puberty. Pupils will learn the main external male and female parts of their body, which includes- penis, testicles, scrotum, nipples, breasts, vulva and vagina. Pupils will learn changes that happen to a male's penis during puberty, including changes in size, erections and wet dreams.
- **Menstruation:** All pupils will learn what menstruation is and girls will learn how to manage it.
- **Mental wellbeing:** To promote an understanding about mental well-being, and how we can improve our mental health.
- **Health protection and prevention:** To know steps that they can take to promote good physical health- including diet, exercise, dental health, sun safety, personal hygiene and germs, sleep, medicines, the signs of physical illness and the healthcare system.
- **Personal safety:** To identify hazards in the environment, including at home, school, fire risks, and safety around roads, railways, water and fireworks.
- **First aid:** The emergency services and how to make a call to the emergency services if necessary.

- **Online safety:** The importance of balancing time spent online, respectful behaviours online (including bullying), risks relating to online gaming, and why some social media and apps are age restricted.

Health Education- Secondary

At Longcause, Secondary Health Education builds on the foundations laid in Primary, with pupils continuing to revisit and embed key knowledge and skills. Health Education remains compulsory for all pupils and **families do not have the right to withdraw their child from any elements of health education**. Progression into the Secondary curriculum is based on individual readiness, not just their chronological age. Where appropriate, pupils will continue to access content from the Primary curriculum to ensure secure understanding. Due to the vulnerability of our cohort of pupils, pupils will continue to learn about public and private behaviour in relation to the changes that happen to their bodies during puberty. Pupils will be taught about masturbation in a suitable and timely manner in order to safeguard themselves.

In accordance with the National Curriculum for Science and RSHE 2026 expectations, pupils will also learn about the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems, the menstrual cycle, fertilisation, gestation, birth, and HIV/AIDS.

Progression Through the Curriculum

Secondary-aged pupils at Longcause do not automatically access the content designed for their chronological age. Instead, progression to the secondary-level Health Education curriculum (Schemes C and above in our RSHE curriculum) is based on a holistic assessment of each pupil's:

- **Cognitive readiness** – their ability to understand and process the concepts being taught
- **Physical development** – including signs of puberty or emerging sexual development
- **Social and emotional context** – such as their engagement in peer or romantic relationships, or exposure to risk.

Some pupils may begin learning content from the Secondary Health curriculum—particularly around puberty—when their bodies are developmentally ready, even if they are not yet cognitively ready to access the full range of associated concepts. In these cases, teaching will focus on practical understanding and safeguarding, with content adapted to meet individual needs and delivered at a pace appropriate to each learner.

Aims, in addition to Primary Health Education:

- **Developing bodies:** The main changes that take place in males and females and its role in reproduction, facts about reproductive health (including fertility and menopause), facts about pregnancy, and menstrual and gynaecological health.

- **Mental wellbeing:** That gambling has negative impacts such as depression, anxiety and suicide and the co-occurrence of alcohol and drug use on their mental health.
- **Wellbeing online:** The risks of viewing online harmful content, including those that promote self-harm, suicide or violence and the risks of illegal behaviour online (including drug and knife supply).
- **Healthy eating:** The risks of unhealthy weight gain, including its risk on cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, and the impact of alcohol on unhealthy weight gain.
- **Drugs, alcohol and tobacco:** The facts about drugs that are legal and both the physical and psychological risks of taking them, including dependency. Pupils will be what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption and how to minimise the risk to their personal safety when drinking alcohol. Pupils will also learn about illegal drugs, and the danger or the misuse of over the counter and prescribed drugs.
- **Understanding the healthcare system:** How to navigate their local healthcare system, including GPs, when to use A&E, minor injuries and pharmacies.
- **Medical responsibility:** The concept of Gillick competence and the circumstances when someone may be deemed to not have the capacity to make decisions about their own medical treatment.
- **Health protection and prevention:** Facts about personal hygiene, the treatment and prevention of infection (including antibiotics), dental health, the facts and science relating to vaccination and immunisation, and the importance of regular self screening, including how to do so.
- **First aid:** Basic treatment for common injuries and some lifesaving skills, including CPR and the recovery position.

Relationships Education- Primary

Under the RSHE 2026 statutory framework, Relationships Education at Longcause School lays the foundation for healthy, respectful relationships across all contexts—including family, friendships, school, and online environments. Some of these skills will be taught and delivered through the Positive Relationships Curriculum. This content reflects the core aims and expectations of the RSHE 2026 framework for primary-aged pupils and is delivered at Longcause through Schemes A and B of our RSHE and Online Safety Curriculums. While primarily designed for pupils in the primary phase, these schemes may also be used with secondary-aged pupils where it is developmentally appropriate and they are not yet ready to progress to the secondary content delivered from Scheme C onwards.

Pupils will learn about what family means and who are the people who can support them. Through Relationships Education in Primary, pupils will be taught the knowledge they need to recognise and report abuse. This will be delivered by focusing on boundaries and privacy, and teaching pupils that they have rights over their own bodies.

Aims:

- **Personal Safety:** How to teach pupils to keep themselves safe, including from others.

- **Body autonomy:** The names for the external private parts of their body (penis, testicles, scrotum, vulva, vagina, breasts). They will learn that their body belongs to them and that consent should be given/ sought before someone is touched.
- **Seeking support:** How to seek support and report concerns both in real life and online, including the NSPCC and Childline.
- **Families and people who care for me:** The characteristics of healthy family life and are able to identify those that are not healthy in families. Pupils will learn to identify and report abuse, and the vocabulary to be able to do so. Pupils will learn that others' families, either in school or the wider world, sometimes look different from their family.
- **Understand Online Friendships and Boundaries:** How to recognise safe and respectful online interactions, and how these relate to real-world relationships.
- **Recognise Risks and Harmful Content:** To identify inappropriate, manipulative, or harmful online behaviours—including bullying, harmful content and harmful contact.
- **Develop Digital Consent and Privacy Awareness:** To understand that they have rights over their digital presence, including what they share, who they share it with, and how to say no.
- **Promote Respectful Digital Communication:** The importance of kindness and responsibility in online communication, reinforcing that the same rules of respect apply online as offline.

Relationships and Sex Education- Secondary

Under the RSHE 2026 statutory framework, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in secondary settings is designed to deepen pupils' understanding of relationships, sexual health, personal identity, and emotional wellbeing.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity. RSE involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, personal identity, diversity and healthy lifestyles. The impact of this is that our pupils will be more knowledgeable about how to keep themselves healthy and safe, and understand more fully the rights that they have over their own body in regards to consent, being able to make safer and more informed decisions in later life.

Progression Through the Curriculum

Secondary-aged pupils at Longcause do not automatically access the content designed for their chronological age. Instead, progression to the secondary-level RSHE curriculum (Schemes C and above in RSHE and Online Safety curriculums) is based on a holistic assessment of each pupil's:

- **Cognitive readiness** – their ability to understand and process the concepts being taught
- **Physical development** – including signs of puberty or emerging sexual development
- **Social and emotional context** – such as their engagement in peer or romantic relationships, or exposure to risk.

This ensures that pupils receive timely, protective education that is relevant to their lived experience, without overwhelming or confusing them. As a result, pupils may not always follow a linear

progression through the scheme of work. On occasion, they may bypass the next planned step or topic if it is deemed more appropriate to prioritise higher-level skills or knowledge that better meet their immediate safeguarding or developmental needs. This is particularly pertinent within pupils later schooling at Longcause.

Decisions about progression are made collaboratively by class teachers and members of the leadership team, drawing on their professional knowledge of the pupil. Where appropriate, families may also be consulted—particularly when behaviours or needs are observed at home that may not be visible in school.

The school will also consider issues possible wellbeing, behaviour and safeguarding issues such as:

- If teaching of specific key skills may contribute to an increase in behaviours resulting from the content.
- If there are prior concerns surrounding the pupil that may be exacerbated by the teaching of certain skills.

Where this is the case, pupils will continue to be taught skills from the Primary Relationships Education curriculum, or other bespoke skills from the Secondary RSHE curriculum that are identified as being appropriate.

Secondary Relationships and Sex Education aims

In the next stage, Relationships and Sex Education, teaching will build on the knowledge acquired at primary and develop further pupils' understanding of families, including marriage, as well as introducing knowledge about romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils will be taught facts about the law, sexuality, puberty, sexual health and relationships in an age appropriate way.

We wish for our pupils to understand the importance of equality and respect, complying with the Equality Act 2010, under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are among the protected characteristics. Diversity and respect, including LGBT, will be woven through skills taught within the Secondary curriculum. While the RSHE 2026 guidance does not prescribe specific teaching on gender identity, schools retain the autonomy to include age- and developmentally-appropriate content where it supports pupil understanding, wellbeing, and safeguarding. At Longcause, we may explore aspects of identity—including gender—in a way that is factual and balanced tailored to the needs of our pupils. We recognise that gender reassignment is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. As such, our curriculum and wider school ethos promote respect for all individuals, including those who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming. We actively challenge discrimination, bullying, and stereotypes, and ensure that all pupils feel seen, valued, and safe.

Aims, in addition to those taught within Primary Relationships Education:

- **Consent:** The law relating to consent and how people actively communicate and recognise consent from others. Pupils will learn consent should be given freely and requires the capacity to consent.
- **Safe and unsafe behaviours:** To know safe and unsafe behaviour in relationships, including romantic and sexual relationships, and the role of pornography in harmful sexual attitudes.
- **Abusive behaviours and the law:** Pupils will learn the concepts and laws related to sexual violence domestic abuse (including financial, controlling and coercive behaviour), sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, grooming, forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty.
- **Sexual relationships and health:** To know the associated risks of sexual activity and how to manage it safely, including contraception, sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy.
- **Respect:** To nurture a responsible attitude towards personal relationships including aspects of mutual respect and care. To know that everyone should be treated with respect, specifically linked to The Protected Characteristics as set out in The Equality Act (2010)
- **Sexual harassment:** To know what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence. Pupils will be taught how to identify sexual harassment, misogyny, and coercive behaviours—both offline and online. Pupils will explore online influencers safely and identify unsafe content that may promote misogyny or unrealistic expectations.
- **Recognise Online Scams and Manipulation:** To identify fraudulent messages, fake accounts, and manipulative online behaviours designed to exploit or deceive.
- **Understand Misinformation and Conspiracy Theories:** To critically evaluate online content, spot disinformation, and understand how conspiracy theories spread and influence beliefs. Pupils will learn the difference between facts, beliefs and opinions, as set out in KCSIE (2025).
- **Explore the Role of AI and Algorithms:** Understand how artificial intelligence, algorithms, and chatbots shape online experiences, influence opinions, and target users.
- **Identify Deepfakes and Digital Fakery:** How to recognise deepfakes, edited content, and deceptive media, and understand the risks they pose to trust and safety, including deepfake pornography.

How Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) will be taught

RSE is taught throughout our RSHE curriculum, specifically within Keeping Myself Safe, Me and My Relationships, and Changing Bodies (Terms 1,2 and 3). Biological aspects of puberty are taught within Changing Bodies in Term 3. Outcomes relating to safety online are interwoven throughout our entire Online Safety Curriculum.

The LLfL subject lead will be responsible for creating schemes of work for RSE as part of the LLfL Curriculum (please refer to LLfL Curriculum Intent Statement).

Pupils will be arranged in groups for RSE in a way that will reflect their individual needs and abilities as well as physical maturation. On occasion, Longcause school may offer a pupil individual RSE sessions to address a specific RSE issue, this includes being taught the same skills with a key trusted adult, or not within whole class teaching. The methods used to teach RSE will be clear, engaging and appropriate for the age and abilities of the pupils. Techniques will be used to ensure that pupils do not need to answer personal questions in a group. We are very aware of the specific needs of our girls at Longcause with them being a minority in a larger population of boys.

Primary-age pupils may ask their teachers or other adults questions pertaining to sex or sexuality which go beyond what is set out for Relationships Education. Similarly, Secondary aged pupils may ask further questions which go beyond that which is being taught to them. Given ease of access to the internet, children whose questions go unanswered may turn to inappropriate sources of information; with this in mind, staff will always try to answer a pupil's question with factually correct information. If a staff member feels that a pupil is asking something that is developmentally inappropriate, they may wish to seek advice before answering. In this case the child will be informed that they will get an explanation. It is important that all pupils feel safe to ask questions and no pupil will be made to feel embarrassed by any member of staff at anything they do ask.

Resources

The SRE programme will be supported with appropriate, resources that are free from stereotypes. (i.e. disability, sexuality, ethnicity, religious and/or gender stereotypes.) Some resources may contain explicit material in order to ensure clear understanding and all resources used will be specially designed for teaching RSE. Care will be taken over the appropriateness of materials and the context in which they are used.

Working with Families

All families can have access to the RSE Policy, the LLFL curriculum (encompassing both RSHE, Life Skills and Online Safety) and teaching materials. Families have been offered the opportunity to gain further information through family consultation and will be given further information about what their child will be learning prior to the topic starting, including example materials. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or some of the Sex Education lessons that fall outside those aspects covered in the National Curriculum science lessons. **Parents do not have the right to withdraw** their children from the skills set out in **Primary Relationships Education, Secondary Relationships education or Health Education lessons for both Primary or Secondary**. Parents do not have to give their reasons for withdrawing their children, but will be made aware of the implications of removing children. Such as:

- Increased vulnerability; vulnerable children have a higher chance of being unable to manage risk when and if they encounter situations (NSPCC 2011).
- It will be the responsibility of parents to provide information on Sex Education issues if they withdraw their child from school Sex Education lessons.

- The pupils will lack knowledge that has been shared with peers in the school.
- A pupil would have less opportunity to practice assertiveness and consent skills in a safe teaching environment.
- If a parent is considering withdrawing their child from Sex Education, they will be asked to meet with the Head teacher to discuss their concerns.
- If it is agreed that a pupil be withdrawn from Sex Education, alternative provision will be made.

Parents will continue to have a right to request to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSE which, unless there are exceptional circumstances, should be granted up to three terms before their child turns 16. At this point, if the pupil themselves wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements for this to happen in one of the three terms before the child turns 16 - the legal age of sexual consent.

There is no right to withdraw the following topics at primary or secondary as we believe the contents of these subjects are important for all children to be taught:

- Life Skills curriculum (full curriculum)
- Online Safety curriculum (full curriculum)
- RSHE curriculum- Keeping myself Safe, Me and My relationships, Puberty, Human Reproduction, Managing my Health, Health and Prevention, Citizenship.
- The laws relating to sexual consent - This content is considered part of **statutory Relationships Education**, which all pupils must receive. This includes- the legal age of consent, what constitutes consent, the importance of respecting boundaries, how the law protects individuals from sexual harm. These topics are essential for safeguarding and are delivered in an age-appropriate and accessible way.
- **Sexual violence in relationships** - This content is considered part of **statutory Relationships Education**, which all pupils must receive. This includes- Recognising abusive or coercive behaviours, understanding consent and boundaries, learning how to seek help and report concerns, knowing the law and protections around sexual violence.
- Teaching about pornography- This content is considered part of **statutory Relationships Education**, which all pupils must receive and is considered essential for safeguarding and digital resilience. This includes- its impact on relationships, body image, consent, and expectations.

The right to withdraw applies to the following topics:

- **Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health:** This includes contraceptive choices, choices in relation to pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and how they are transmitted and how to reduce the risk through safer sex.

Sensitive Topics

RSE includes some sensitive topics that require careful planning and communication. At Longcause, we have identified these topics in consultation with staff, using our knowledge of pupils' needs and feedback from families. Families will be notified in advance of any sensitive content being taught and will be fully informed about the language, key knowledge, and approach used. Parents and carers are welcome to request copies of the learning resources used if they wish to review them. Class teachers, along with the LLFL subject lead and ELT will consider the suitability of key topics prior to teaching them with individual/ groups of pupils. Knowledge of the pupils will be used, considering their wider needs and behaviours and therefore reasonable adjustments will be made.

These topics include-

- Puberty and reproduction
- Sexual health
- Unsafe behaviours in relationships, including familial, romantic and sexual
- Illegal and abusive behaviours, including grooming, sexual violence and forms of exploitation
- Pornography
- Illnesses, such as cancer

Additional Information

Equal Opportunities - In support of equalities it is expected that all pupils, regardless of age, ability or disability, sex, race, gender re-assignment, faith and sexual orientation will have the same opportunities to benefit from the sex education resources and teaching methods.

Bullying – Refer to policy document on behaviour. All staff are aware of and act upon incidents/comments relating to sexual bullying/harassment including homophobic attitudes and vocabulary. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated at Longcause School, whether by pupils bullying pupils, adults bullying pupils, pupils bullying adults or adults bullying adults. Preventing bullying, including cyber-bullying, disability related bullying and homophobic bullying, is important here. Please see our anti-bullying policy for more information on this.

Use of Visitors – Health professionals are sometimes used as part of the curriculum delivery. They have met Plymouth City Councils vetting procedures, are always with a member of staff and are aware of the morals/values framework within the RSE policy.

Named Governor for RSE: Longcause has a named governor for Relationships, Sex and Health Education, who parents are welcome to contact if they have any concerns that they wish to talk to them about. They can be contacted via the Clerk to Board of Governors on 01752 336881.