THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL GROUP LTD

Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy









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Date:	**1st September 2026**
To be reviewed:	**July 2027**
Reviewed:	**Aug '20, Feb '20; April 21; Nov 2021; Sept '22; April 23; Sept 23; Sept 24; July 25; Sept 26;**
Version:	**10**

Note: This policy has been developed and reviewed by The Alternative School Group Limited using internal expertise, professional judgement, current statutory guidance and appropriate digital tools. Final approval and responsibility for the policy rests with The Alternative School Group Limited.

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1. Policy Statement

TAS is committed to providing high-quality, age-appropriate Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) that supports pupils to be safe, healthy, informed and prepared for life.

Our RSHE provision is designed to help pupils develop positive and respectful relationships; understand their own physical and mental health and wellbeing; recognise unsafe, abusive or exploitative behaviour; understand consent, boundaries and privacy; navigate the online world safely; and develop the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed decisions as they grow towards adulthood.

Teaching is appropriate to pupils' age, maturity and stage of development and is delivered progressively throughout the school.

This policy should be read alongside the school's policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and child protection, online safety, behaviour, anti-bullying, equality, SEND, curriculum and teaching and learning.

2. Statutory Framework

TAS has developed this policy with regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance, *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education*, effective from 1 September 2026.

The school will also have regard, as applicable, to:

- the Education Act 1996;
- the Education Act 2002;
- the Children and Social Work Act 2017;
- the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019;
- the Equality Act 2010;
- the current statutory safeguarding guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*;
- the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework;
- the SEND Code of Practice; and
- any applicable Independent School Standards and other statutory requirements relevant to TAS.

The school will keep its RSHE provision under review and amend this policy and its curriculum where necessary to reflect changes in legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding risks and the needs of pupils.

3. Aims

Through RSHE, TAS aims to:

- provide pupils with accurate, balanced and age-appropriate knowledge;
- help pupils form and maintain safe, respectful and healthy relationships;
- teach the importance of kindness, respect, honesty, trust, equality and responsibility;
- enable pupils to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships;
- teach pupils about appropriate boundaries, privacy and consent in an age-appropriate and progressive way;
- help pupils recognise and respond to coercion, harassment, abuse, exploitation and other harmful behaviour;
- develop pupils' understanding of physical health, mental health and emotional wellbeing;
- prepare pupils for the physical and emotional changes associated with growing up and puberty;
- provide appropriate sex education as pupils mature;
- develop pupils' understanding of online relationships, digital behaviour and online harms;
- help pupils critically evaluate information, influences and behaviours encountered online and offline;
- ensure pupils know how and where to seek help;
- promote respect for others, including those with different backgrounds, families, beliefs and protected characteristics;
- support pupils to understand relevant law and their rights and responsibilities; and
- prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

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4. A Whole-School, Developmental Approach

TAS educates children and young people from age 2 to 18. RSHE is therefore planned as a coherent and progressive programme rather than as a series of isolated lessons.

Content is sequenced so that pupils develop secure foundations before encountering more complex material. The school takes account of chronological age alongside maturity, development, prior learning, safeguarding considerations and the needs of individual pupils.

4.1 Early Years Foundation Stage

For children in the EYFS, learning is rooted in the EYFS statutory framework and is not delivered as formal sex education.

Children are supported, in developmentally appropriate ways, to learn about:

- themselves and other people;
- families and people who care for them;
- friendships, kindness and sharing;
- feelings and emotions;
- similarities and differences;
- appropriate personal boundaries;
- privacy and personal care;
- the correct language for body parts where appropriate;
- recognising when something makes them uncomfortable;
- identifying trusted adults and asking for help;
- basic health, hygiene and self-care; and
- safe and appropriate use of technology.

This establishes the foundations for later Relationships Education.

4.2 Primary

Relationships Education forms the core of provision in the primary years, alongside appropriate Health Education.

Teaching progressively develops pupils' understanding of:

- families and people who care for them;
- caring friendships;
- respectful relationships;
- appropriate boundaries and privacy;
- permission and consent in age-appropriate contexts;
- recognising and reporting concerns;
- online relationships and internet safety;
- bullying, including cyberbullying;
- physical and emotional health;
- mental wellbeing;
- healthy lifestyles;
- basic first aid and safety;
- changing bodies and puberty; and
- the knowledge pupils need to keep themselves and others safe.

Where TAS provides sex education beyond the statutory Science curriculum in the primary phase, this will be clearly identified to parents.

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4.3 Secondary

Relationships and Sex Education is taught progressively through the secondary years and is complemented by Health Education.

The programme includes age-appropriate teaching about:

- respectful relationships, including friendships and intimate relationships;
- different types of committed relationships and families;
- consent and the law relating to consent;
- sexual harassment, sexual violence and abuse;
- coercion, manipulation and controlling behaviour;
- power imbalances within relationships;
- stereotypes and harmful attitudes;
- misogyny and other forms of prejudice or discrimination;
- intimate and sexual relationships;
- sexual health;
- contraception and pregnancy;
- sexually transmitted infections;
- fertility and reproductive health;
- pornography and its potential impact on expectations, relationships and behaviour;
- online sexual content and harmful online influences;
- the sharing of intimate images;
- AI-generated or manipulated sexual images and deepfakes;
- grooming, exploitation and abuse;
- relevant aspects of the law;
- mental wellbeing;
- physical health;
- drugs, alcohol and associated risks;
- health risks including spiking;
- women's health and other relevant health matters;
- suicide prevention, taught safely and appropriately; and
- accessing reliable information, healthcare, advice and support.

Teaching will distinguish between factual information, the law, individual beliefs and matters on which views may differ.

4.4 Post 16

TAS recognises that pupils approaching adulthood require relevant and mature education which prepares them for independent life.

Provision for Post 16 will therefore reinforce and extend previous learning where appropriate, including matters such as:

- healthy adult relationships;
- consent, communication and personal boundaries;
- sexual health and accessing healthcare;
- contraception and reproductive health;
- online relationships and digital safety;
- harassment, abuse and exploitation;
- personal safety;
- mental health and wellbeing;
- alcohol, drugs and risk;
- managing relationships during transitions to university, employment and independent living; and
- relevant rights, responsibilities and law.

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Content will respond appropriately to emerging risks and the needs of the cohort.

5. Curriculum Planning and Sequencing

The detailed content and sequencing of RSHE is set out in the School's RSHE curriculum or progression map.

The curriculum will be reviewed regularly to ensure that:

- statutory content is covered;
- learning is sequenced appropriately;
- unnecessary repetition is avoided while important concepts are revisited and developed;
- content is appropriate to pupils' age and maturity;
- emerging safeguarding issues are addressed;
- pupils are prepared before they are likely to encounter particular risks;
- teaching reflects the needs of the school community; and
- there is appropriate continuity between EYFS, primary, secondary and Post 16 provision.

The school may adapt the timing of particular content where there is a safeguarding or pastoral reason to do so. Where this represents a significant departure from the published programme, parents will be informed as appropriate.

6. Teaching and Learning

RSHE will be taught by appropriately prepared members of staff and may be delivered through dedicated lessons and relevant areas of the wider curriculum.

Teaching will:

- establish clear expectations for respectful discussion;
- use accurate and appropriate terminology;
- avoid assumptions about pupils' experiences or family circumstances;
- distinguish appropriately between fact, law, opinion and belief;
- provide opportunities for questions;
- challenge harmful stereotypes and misinformation;
- avoid encouraging pupils to disclose personal information publicly;
- enable pupils to understand how to obtain help and advice; and
- be sensitive to pupils who may have experienced abuse, trauma, bereavement or other difficult circumstances.

Teachers will not present their personal views as fact or seek to persuade pupils to adopt a particular personal or political viewpoint.

Where topics are contested, teaching will be handled appropriately, objectively and in accordance with statutory requirements.

7. Safeguarding

RSHE is an important element of the school's safeguarding provision.

Pupils will learn, in age-appropriate ways, how to:

- recognise behaviour that is unsafe or inappropriate;
- understand boundaries and consent;
- recognise grooming, coercion, exploitation and abuse;
- stay safer online;
- identify trusted adults;
- seek help for themselves or another person; and
- report concerns.

RSHE lessons are not confidential spaces in which safeguarding requirements cease to apply.

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Staff will make pupils aware that they cannot promise confidentiality if a pupil discloses information which raises a safeguarding concern.

Any disclosure or safeguarding concern arising during RSHE will be managed in accordance with TAS's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.

8. Equality, Inclusion and SEND

RSHE at TAS will be inclusive and accessible.

The school will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will ensure that teaching is appropriate for all pupils.

Teaching will recognise that pupils may come from a wide variety of families and backgrounds. Pupils will be taught to treat other people with dignity and respect.

The school will make reasonable and appropriate adjustments to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can access RSHE effectively. This may include adapting resources, vocabulary, teaching methods, pace, level of repetition or mode of communication.

Particular consideration will be given to pupils who may be more vulnerable to exploitation, coercion or abuse.

9. LGBT Content and Contested Issues

The school will teach relevant factual and legal information in an age-appropriate manner and will promote respect for all pupils.

Where LGBT matters arise within the curriculum, they will be handled sensitively, factually and appropriately to pupils' age and development.

The school will not unlawfully discriminate against pupils or families because of a protected characteristic.

Where an issue is contested, teachers will distinguish clearly between established facts and law and matters on which different views are held. The school will not teach a contested position as though it were an uncontested fact or encourage pupils to adopt a particular view.

Pupils will be expected to discuss sensitive matters respectfully and will be taught that disagreement does not justify bullying, harassment or discrimination.

10. Online Safety, Pornography and Harmful Content

Online safety is integrated throughout the RSHE programme.

As pupils mature, teaching will address relevant risks including:

- harmful or inappropriate content;
- pornography;
- unrealistic representations of relationships and sexual behaviour;
- online misogyny and other harmful ideologies;
- grooming and exploitation;
- sexting and the sharing of intimate images;
- pressure to create or share sexual material;
- AI-generated and manipulated sexual images;
- deepfakes;
- misinformation;
- coercive and controlling behaviour online; and
- the legal and personal consequences of creating, possessing or sharing certain material.

Teaching will focus on safety, critical thinking, respect, the law and routes to support rather than exposing pupils unnecessarily to harmful material.

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11. Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

The School's Health Education programme develops pupils' understanding of mental wellbeing and how to seek support.

At secondary level, TAS will maintain an appropriate approach to suicide prevention education. Any teaching concerning suicide or self-harm will be planned carefully, delivered by appropriately prepared staff and informed by safeguarding considerations and recognised good practice.

Teaching will avoid unnecessary detail that could increase risk and will focus on recognising concerns, seeking help, supporting wellbeing and accessing appropriate services.

Where staff have concerns about an individual pupil, the school's safeguarding and pastoral procedures will take precedence over curriculum provision.

12. Resources and Teaching Materials

TAS is responsible for ensuring that RSHE resources are appropriate, accurate and suitable for pupils' age and maturity.

Resources will be selected with consideration of:

- curriculum purpose;
- age and developmental appropriateness;
- accuracy and quality;
- accessibility, including for pupils with SEND;
- safeguarding;
- equality;
- the needs and sensitivities of the cohort; and
- whether the resource presents factual, legal and contested material appropriately.

Parents may request to see RSHE teaching materials in accordance with statutory guidance.

The school will be open with parents about what is taught and will not enter into arrangements with a provider which prevent appropriate curriculum materials from being made available to parents.

13. External Visitors and Providers

External organisations or specialist visitors may contribute to RSHE where this enhances the curriculum.

The school remains responsible for what is taught.

Before an external provider delivers material, the school will, as appropriate:

- check the provider's suitability and credentials;
- establish the educational purpose of the session;
- review lesson plans and resources in advance;
- consider age appropriateness and accessibility;
- ensure content is consistent with this policy and the school's safeguarding obligations;
- ensure arrangements for questions and disclosures are clear; and
- ensure that relevant materials can be made available to parents.

External providers will not replace the school's responsibility for a planned and coherent RSHE curriculum.

14. Parents and Carers

TAS recognises parents and carers as important partners in children's education.

The school will communicate openly about RSHE and will provide information about the curriculum and its sequencing.

Parents will be able to:

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- understand what their child will be taught;
- ask questions about the curriculum;
- raise concerns with the school;
- request access to curriculum materials; and
- exercise applicable rights concerning withdrawal from sex education.

The school will proactively engage and consult parents when developing and reviewing this policy.

The school will consider consultation responses carefully while retaining responsibility for ensuring that statutory requirements and safeguarding responsibilities are met.

15. Right to Withdraw from Sex Education

It is important to distinguish Sex Education from Relationships Education, Health Education and the statutory Science curriculum.

Primary

Parents may request that their child is withdrawn from any Sex Education provided by the school which is additional to the statutory curriculum.

There is no right to withdraw a pupil from Relationships Education or from relevant content taught as part of the statutory Science curriculum.

Secondary

Parents have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from some or all of the Sex Education delivered as part of RSE, other than content which forms part of the statutory Science curriculum.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or applicable statutory Health Education.

Before granting a withdrawal request, the Headteacher or an appropriate senior member of staff will normally discuss the request with the parent and, where appropriate, the pupil. The purpose of the discussion is to understand the parent's wishes and explain the nature and purpose of the curriculum, including any potential effects of withdrawal.

Except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect a parent's request to withdraw their child from Sex Education within RSE, up to and until three terms before the pupil turns 16.

From three terms before their 16th birthday, a pupil who has previously been withdrawn may choose to receive Sex Education. Where the pupil wishes to do so, the school will make arrangements for them to receive the teaching during one of those terms.

Where a pupil is withdrawn, the school will provide appropriate, purposeful alternative education.

Withdrawal will not apply to relevant content taught through statutory Science.

16. Questions from Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to ask appropriate questions.

Teachers will answer questions honestly, sensitively and at a level appropriate to pupils' age and maturity.

Where a question is inappropriate for the pupil's age or the particular teaching context, the teacher may explain that it will be addressed at a later stage or suggest that the pupil discusses it with a parent or another appropriate adult.

Teachers will remain alert to questions which may indicate a safeguarding concern.

Anonymous question methods may be used where appropriate, particularly with older pupils.

17. Confidentiality

Staff will respect pupils' privacy but cannot promise absolute confidentiality.

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If information shared by a pupil indicates that the pupil or another child may be at risk of harm, the member of staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

Pupils will be reminded of this principle before sensitive discussions where appropriate.

18. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body / Proprietor / Trust Board

The appropriate governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school meets its statutory obligations and for approving and monitoring this policy in accordance with the school's governance arrangements.

Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that RSHE is implemented effectively throughout the school.

RSHE Lead (Campus Headteachers)

The designated RSHE Lead is responsible for:

- coordinating the whole-school programme;
- maintaining curriculum progression and coverage;
- supporting staff;
- reviewing resources;
- monitoring teaching and learning;
- liaising with safeguarding, pastoral, SEND and curriculum leaders;
- coordinating communication with parents; and
- keeping provision under review in light of statutory guidance and emerging needs.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL and DDSL ensure that curriculum planning reflects relevant safeguarding risks and that staff understand how to respond to disclosures and concerns.

Teachers

Teachers are responsible for delivering RSHE in accordance with this policy and the agreed curriculum, establishing a safe learning environment and following safeguarding procedures.

19. Staff Training

The school will ensure that staff delivering RSHE have appropriate knowledge, confidence and support.

Training will be provided or updated where necessary, particularly in relation to:

- safeguarding;
- consent;
- sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- online harms;
- pornography and intimate images;
- harmful attitudes and stereotypes;
- SEND and accessibility;
- mental health and suicide prevention;
- managing sensitive questions and discussions; and
- changes in legislation or statutory guidance.

Staff who are not confident about delivering a particular sensitive area should seek support from their headteacher, or relevant senior leader before teaching it.

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20. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of RSHE will be monitored through appropriate methods which may include:

- curriculum reviews;
- lesson visits or learning walks;
- scrutiny of planning and resources;
- pupil voice;
- staff feedback;
- parent feedback;
- safeguarding and pastoral information;
- assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding; and
- review of emerging local and national safeguarding concerns.

The purpose of assessment in RSHE is to identify pupils' knowledge and understanding and inform future teaching. Pupils will not be assessed on their personal beliefs, experiences or family circumstances.

21. Responding to Emerging Issues

The nature of relationships, technology and online risk can change quickly.

The school may therefore introduce or adapt teaching in response to:

- an emerging safeguarding risk;
- new technology;
- online trends;
- misinformation;
- changes in law or statutory guidance;
- issues affecting the school community; or
- identified gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Any such teaching will remain age-appropriate and consistent with the principles of this policy.

Where there is a significant change to planned provision, parents will be informed as appropriate.

22. Links with Other School Policies

This policy should be read alongside relevant TAS policies, including:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Relationships, Responsibility and Community Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Curriculum Policy;
- Mental Health Policy;
- First Aid, Medical Conditions and Medicine Policy; and
- Staff Code of Conduct.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy take precedence.

23. Parental Consultation, Publication and Review

TAS will consult parents when developing and reviewing its RSHE policy.

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Following consultation, the school will consider responses and make amendments where appropriate before the policy is submitted for approval through the school's governance arrangements.

The approved policy will be:

- published on the school website;
- available free of charge to anyone who requests it; and
- communicated to relevant staff.

The policy will be kept under regular review. TAS will review it at least annually initially and sooner where there is a significant change in legislation, statutory guidance, curriculum provision or safeguarding need.

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