RYDE SCHOOL
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Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy

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Date of next review:	Summer Term 2026-27	
Owner(s):	JCH/CBV	
Approval body:	Governing Body	
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	Inspection folder	✓

POLICY STATEMENT

Legislation

This policy will be compliant and works in partnership with the following guidance:

- DfE 'Relationship Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' Statutory guidance
- DfE 'Relationships Education (Primary)' Statutory guidance
- DfE 'Science, PE, Computing, Citizenship programmes of study
- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- The Independent School Standards Regulations

This policy is written in line with current legislation and guidance.

DEFINITIONS

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is defined as:

> *Learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality, sexual health, diversity and personal identity in an age appropriate manner. It should equip children and young people with the information, skills and positive values to have safe, respectful and fulfilling relationships and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being*.

Health Education is defined as:

> '*A way to help children and young people make informed, positive choices about their health, wellbeing, and relationships*' (DfE).

Our School aims to equip all pupils to be prepared for life. So that they as individuals make healthy and informed choices regarding their mental, physical, sexual health and wellbeing as well as having respect for others and regard for the rights of others so that each individual thrives in life.

Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education and Relationships Education (Primary) is a clearly identifiable part of the School's Personal Development (PD Curriculum) that encompasses the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum. It is primarily taught in timetabled sessions with follow up through assemblies and class times. It is taught by staff regularly trained in safeguarding and pastoral matters, with expert visitors invited in to enhance the programme where appropriate. Lessons are delivered to encourage pupil participation by using a variety of teaching approaches with opportunities to develop interpersonal skills, reflection and critical thinking.

The curriculum is spiralled from Nursery through to the Upper Sixth Form where pupils learn the topics:

- Being safe
- Being respectful
- Healthy mind, body and soul
- Living in the wider world with a global outlook

Relationships Education:

Nursery, Pre-Prep and Prep School: Relationships education builds on respect in all relationships and the value of friends, family and the wider community. At the heart of this is mental wellbeing and self-care. Forging positive relationships in this way also encompasses the online world and how to stay safe within it.

Senior School: We build further on the above definition as pupils develop their resilience and character. Pupils are taught to embrace challenges with a full understanding and knowledge of how to make informed choices about their actions and supported to develop their capacity to make sound decisions and be able to form and maintain healthy relationships. All of our Personal Development courses are designed to promote kindness, respect, courage and responsibility.

Sex Education:

Prep School: Prep School Sex Education includes body differences, puberty, how a baby is conceived and born, personal space, and online safety (including consent). In Nursery and Pre-Prep, foundations are taught under the umbrella of 'Being Respectful'. Years 1 and 2 cover the 'Pantosaurus' programme which covers knowing the names of body parts.

Senior School: Provides practical advice regarding staying safe and healthy and also comprises important areas including consent and respect, as well as the legal implications of negative behaviour, including online.

Pupils in all sections of the School are equipped with the knowledge and are supported to develop their capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. Pupils are supported to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support. This includes guiding pupils on how to access internal school support and local community-based 'Family Help' pathways (formerly referred to as Early Help).

Teaching of Sex Education is also included in the Science curriculums in both sections of the School.

The School's Personal Development Programme also includes teaching pupils knowledge and skills in Careers and Citizenship education, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education (SMSC), Safeguarding and Social Action. Our Personal Development curriculum maps are available on request.

SMSC and Personal Development

This policy also covers the School's approach to both spiritual, moral, social and cultural education that is also primarily taught through the Personal Development Programme as well as being entwined throughout other curriculum areas.

The curriculum:

- Is broad and balanced and spirals from Nursery through to the Upper Sixth Form
- Is based on factual information from reliable sources including about the law and legal rights

- Promotes safe, equal, caring, healthy and enjoyable relationships and discusses real-life issues appropriate to the age and stage of pupils, including friendships, families, consent, relationship abuse, sexual exploitation, making healthy choices and safe relationships online
- Provides a positive view of human sexuality, with honest and medically factually accurate information, so that pupils can learn about their bodies and sexual and reproductive health in ways that are appropriate to their age and maturity and in line with statutory expectations
- Gives all pupils opportunities to reflect on values and influences (such as from peers, media, faith and culture) that may shape their attitudes to relationships and sex, and encourages respect for different views
- Includes throughout learning how to get help and treatment from sources, signposting pupils to a range of reliable sources
- Fosters gender equality and LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, questioning) equality and encourages pupils to challenge all forms of discrimination in line with the school's EDI (Equality and Diversity Strategy)
- Meets the needs of all pupils from diverse backgrounds
- Responds to pupils' views about their learning and RSE so that teaching can be made relevant to their real lives and assessed and adapted as their needs change - both contextually and globally

The programme works in partnership with parents and pupils, regularly informing them about what will be learned and how parents can contribute at home.

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EDUCATION

The aims of Ryde School:

- To provide a carefully structured and thorough education which enables day and boarding pupils to achieve their academic and personal potential and to develop skills appropriate to the world of work and life in the twenty-first century
- To enable pupils to develop as citizens of integrity, who place service to others above themselves, who are both communicators and listeners, who have the confidence and self-esteem to lead others
- To ensure a civilised, caring, healthy and happy community emphasising high moral standards, self-discipline, and emotional and spiritual development
- To encourage pupils to participate in an extensive range of sporting, cultural and enriching activities
- To develop an understanding of our responsibilities and our duty to serve the local, national and world communities

Spiritual Development

It is our aim to enable pupils to:

- Be at ease with both themselves and their place in the community, so that they can grow in self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence
- Look out from themselves at the world which they inhabit with a sense of wonder and an appreciation of its complexity
- Learn about major world faiths and to understand the significance of belief in many peoples' lives
- Reflect on their own values and beliefs

- Have an appreciation of the role that Christianity has played in shaping the values and beliefs in our own country
- Develop self-awareness and to recognise and control human feelings and emotions

The School encourages spiritual development through:

- Attendance at church services along with School, Year Group and House assemblies, tutor or form meetings, along with lessons in religious studies and personal development. Pupils are encouraged to develop and employ a set of values, principles and beliefs to guide their behaviour through life and to explore the specific advantages that a spiritual approach to life can bring
- Pupils being encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings in an imaginative way through, for example; art and design, drama, music and literature
- Trips that help to promote a sense of wonder about the world
- An ethos in which differences are accommodated, individuals can grow and flourish; all are expected to respect others and be respected
- Promoting teaching styles which value pupils' questions and thoughts, and allow them to reflect on the wider questions of life

Moral Development

It is our aim to encourage pupils to:

- Accept responsibility for their own behaviour, to know the difference between right and wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law
- Appreciate that others may have different moral values, needs and feelings to their own
- Think through the consequences of their actions
- Be willing to express views on ethical issues and have opportunities in lessons to do so

The School encourages moral development through:

- Promoting moral behaviour with a clear code which is consistently applied
- Taking measures to prevent discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age and any other protected characteristics
- A system of rewards and sanctions
- Discussions of moral issues in assemblies and lessons
- Golden rules and golden time in Pre-Prep

Social Awareness

It is our aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Pupils understand and live by the School motto of 'Ut Prosim' so that pupils may be of service to their communities. We therefore look to enable pupils to become confident and positive contributors to their community

- Pupils relate well to other people
- Pupils work successfully as a member of a team or group, exchanging ideas and resolving conflicts by working towards a consensus
- Pupils show respect for people, living things, property and the environment
- Pupils take responsibility for their own development and that of others
- Pupils appreciate the rights and responsibilities of individuals within the wider social setting
- Pupils understand that society functions in structures such as the family, the School and the wider community
- Pupils participate in activities that support the community

The School encourages social development by:

- Fostering a sense of community
- a coaching scheme for the Lower Sixth in the Senior School, playground pals (Prep School) and monitors
- Encouraging pupils to work cooperatively, in class, in team activities and in adventurous training
- Providing positive group experiences – examples of which include sporting fixtures, concerts, plays, musicals, dance, residential trips, Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- Providing opportunities for pupils to exercise leadership and responsibility
- Encouraging links with the world of work
- Volunteering

Cultural Awareness

It is our aim to enable pupils to:

- Respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; the School will ensure that, insofar as is reasonably practical, when political issues are discussed, pupils are presented with a balanced presentation of a range of views
- Understand their own, and others, values and beliefs
- Understand the changing and evolutionary value of cultures
- Be willing to be involved in cultural and artistic enterprises

The School supports pupils' cultural development through:

- Work within curriculum areas – for example, languages, arts, humanities
- Extra-curricular activities
- Trips and expeditions
- Displays, posters and exhibitions
- In Pre-Prep the pupils explore celebrations around the world and marking the Saints Days of the UK countries

Organisation of the Programme

RSE and Health Education are coordinated across the School by the Deputy Head Mrs Jemma Harding in conjunction with Pastoral Leads in each section of the School (Mrs Philippa Bussell - Senior School, Mrs Gilly Gallerwood - Prep School, Mr Matt Rochford - Pre-Prep and Nursery) who are responsible for the overall planning, implementation and review of the programmes.

RSE and Health education will be conducted in accordance with legislation and DfE statutory guidance and will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.

The majority of the programme will be taught within our Personal Development curriculum and be supported by the delivery of the national curriculum in Citizenship, Science, Physical Education and Computing. Pupils can be taught in mixed ability, mixed gender or single sex groupings. There will be additional expert input from external agencies where appropriate.

Delivery

The School's Personal Development programme teaches all aspects of the curriculum with some biological aspects of RSE also linking to the Science curriculum. Other aspects are also included in Philosophy, Religious Studies and Ethics sessions. Topics are all taught at an age specific level, using language and information that is appropriate and relevant to their stage of development.

The needs of our pupils including those with SEND are considered in the teaching of PSHE; this involves making any reasonable adjustments. We are mindful of the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and take account of the Equality Act (2010).

In Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) we teach pupils about:

Families

Pupils should know:

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships
- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children
- what marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony
- why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships
- the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting
- how to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy; judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed

Respectful relationships, including friendships

Pupils should know:

- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might pressurise nonconsensual behaviour or encourage prejudice); .that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help
- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable
- the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal
- how online misogyny and harmful attitudes influence real-world behaviours, sexual harassment, and peer-on-peer abuse
- the continuum of harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), harassment, and sexual violence in alignment with Part 5 of KCSIE 2026, emphasizing healthy relationships, consent, and early intervention to address HSB before it escalates

Online and media

Pupils should know:

- their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online
- not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them
- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- the impact of viewing harmful content
- that specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography, presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners
- that the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes is a criminal offence carrying severe penalties, and that any incident involving nudes or semi-nudes requires a designated safeguarding response, regardless of whether it is framed as 'consensual' between pupils
- the risks of artificial intelligence and deepfakes, explaining that nudes/semi-nudes include digitally altered content, deepfakes, and images generated or manipulated using generative AI tools
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online

Being safe

Pupils should know:

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships
- how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)

Intimate sexual relationships, including sexual health:

Pupils should know:

- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage
- that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help)
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing
- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour
- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

In Health Education we teach pupils about:

Mental wellbeing

Pupils should know:

- how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary
- that happiness is linked to being connected to others
- how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns
- common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression)
- how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health
- the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness

Internet safety and harms

Pupils should know:

- the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image), how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships including social media, the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online
- how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours
- the default expectation of a mobile-free environment across the entire school day and its positive impact on digital health and focus
- emerging technological harms, online grooming via algorithms, and the misuse of generative AI

Physical health and fitness

Pupils should know:

- the positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress
- the characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardio-vascular ill-health
- about the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation

Healthy eating

Pupils should know:

- how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay, cardio-vascular ill-health and cancer

Drugs, alcohol and tobacco

Pupils should know:

- the facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions
- the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances
- the physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood
- the physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency
- awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks, the facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so

Health and prevention

Pupils should know:

- about personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics

- about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist
- (late Senior) the benefits of regular self-examination and screening
- the facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination
- the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn

Basic first aid

Pupils should know:

- basic treatment for common injuries
- life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR
- the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed

Changing adolescent body

Pupils should know:

- key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual wellbeing
- the main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health

External experts may be invited to assist from time to time with the delivery of the Sex and Relationship Education programme, but will be expected to comply with the provisions of this policy.

Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education form part of the curriculum in every Year Group as per statutory guidance. Our curriculum maps are available on request.

Training of staff

Staff teaching this programme undergo training on a timely basis to ensure they are up to-date with the Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education programme and the wider Personal Development programme at the School.

Training of staff will also be scheduled around any updated guidance on the programme and any new developments in content. Leaders at the School will ensure that teachers receive training on the best practice principles as outlined by the PSHE Association on creating a safe learning environment. To include:

- Setting ground rules
- The safe handling of questions
- The protection of vulnerable learners
- Signposting for further help and support

The School uses resources including the TES training materials as well as the PSHE resources published by the DfE to train staff members in the teaching of PSHE.

The Proactive Curriculum

Prevention and Safeguarding

At the heart of all Personal Development teaching is keeping pupils safe. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) sets out that all schools and colleges should ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including how to stay safe online, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

We follow best practice guidelines allowing children an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports which are addressed following the School's effective safeguarding procedures.

Our staff maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and are trained in how to handle disclosures that are often raised from PSHE learning.

Our planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the PSHE curriculum is part of our whole school approach that prepares our students for life in the modern world. It is delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced through the whole curriculum. We have planned our programme with a spiral approach to meet the needs of our pupils, considering their age and stage of development. Our schemes of learning build on prior knowledge with the importance of healthy relationships developed during the earlier years, and a focus on specific aspects, such as teen relationship violence, sexual exploitation, and coercion – at an appropriate stage.

Our proactive preventative Personal Development curriculum specifically includes:
The points related to the 'Being Safe' element of DfE Statutory RSHE;

- Teaching about healthy and respectful relationships
- Teaching about what respectful behaviour looks like
- Boundaries and consent
- Stereotyping, prejudice, and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Teaching about the features of unhealthy and coercive relationships, including how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- Teaching about the features of sexual harassment
- The concepts of, and laws relating to sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, and honour-based abuse such as forced marriage and FGM, and how to access support
- Teaching about the risks associated with making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes (including AI-generated content, deepfakes, and manipulated images) and the potential impacts of viewing pornography
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always unacceptable; and how the law defines them
- Keeping safe whilst using the internet and online programmes
- When, why, and how to report abuse and access appropriate support

As a part of our integrated Safeguarding curriculum for pupils, we ensure that the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead and pastoral team are fully involved in the Personal Development Curriculum and understand when these topics are taught, so they are prepared to support pupils who disclose or are affected by the issues

raised. All staff are also made aware of when topics are taught to pupils to be ready to answer questions at any point in the School, should they arise.

Parental Involvement

We understand that the teaching of some aspects of the programme may be of concern to parents/carers. The content of the programme provides pupils with factual content, in line with our school values and ethos. Pupils will be encouraged to share their views, and to recognise and appreciate views which may differ from their own. Parents/carers will be regularly updated and consulted on the content of the programme.

We respect the legal right of parents/carers to withdraw their child from all or part of the Sex Education component of the RSHE programme, except for statutory elements included within the national curriculum for Citizenship, PE, Computing and Science. Parents will not be able to withdraw their child from Relationships Education and/or Health Education content. If a parent wishes their child to be withdrawn from any of the lesson content, parents should discuss this with the Head Master and records will be kept as evidence. In accordance with the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance, a pupil who has been withdrawn from Sex Education content will have the right to opt into Sex Education content from their 15th birthday (specifically, three academic terms before turning 16).

Equal opportunities

We understand and abide by The Equality Act 2010, and fully respect the rights of pupils and staff members. Under the provisions of the Equality Act, we will not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). We will also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage and be mindful of the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects. We are dedicated to delivering the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education programme with sensitivity and respect, avoiding any derogatory or prejudicial terms which may cause offence.

The School is alert to issues such as sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and takes positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled. We will model positive behaviours. Our pastoral and behaviour policies support all pupils.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up. Any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be taken seriously. We will foster an understanding for all pupils of healthy relationships, acceptable behaviour and the right of everyone to equal treatment. This will help to ensure that pupils treat each other well and go on to be respectful and kind adults.
The school is committed to supporting pupils who are LGB or gender-questioning in line with statutory expectations, maintaining a clear distinction between pastoral care, parental involvement, and safeguarding.

MONITORING

This policy will be reviewed annually or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and / or government guidance
- as a result of any other significant change or event
- in the event that the policy is determined not to be effective

We encourage our pupils, staff and parents to give us feedback on our Personal Development provision. This can be through the Pastoral Teams in each section of the School or directly to Mrs Jemma Harding (Deputy Head). We also discuss our Personal Development provision in staff meetings across the School. Our pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning in this area and we welcome their views in our annual school survey of parents and pupils and staff feedback is gathered regularly.

ASSESSMENT

In the Senior and Prep School, pupils complete in-House assessments regularly so that teachers can gauge individual pupil understanding of topics and ensure that content has been understood by all.

In the Pre-Prep and Nursery, floor books are regularly completed by pupils in order to gauge and assess their pupil voice on topics in an age appropriate way.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and approved by Governors.