

ALP SITTINGBOURNE

PSHE (Personal, Social, Health Education) Policy

(including Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE), statutory from September 2026)

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ALP Sittingbourne PSHE policy (including RSE) – September 2026

1. Context

All schools must provide a curriculum that is broadly based, balanced and meets the needs of all pupils. ALP Sittingbourne provides PSHE as a whole-school curriculum which supports students' personal development, wellbeing, safety, preparation for adulthood and readiness for life and work.

Under the Education Act 2002, the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and other relevant legislation, PSHE contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

ALP Sittingbourne are an alternative provision setting. The Department for Education's July 2025 statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance applies to alternative provision and requires particular consideration of pupils' needs, vulnerabilities and the adjustments required to make teaching accessible.

This policy has been updated for September 2026 to reflect the DfE statutory guidance published in July 2025, which updates the 2019 statutory guidance. The guidance states that schools must have regard to it and should have good reasons where they depart from guidance which states that schools should or should not do something.

2. PSHE

At ALP Sittingbourne, we teach Personal, Social, Health Education as a whole-school approach to underpin students' development as people and because we believe this supports their learning capacity and preparation for adulthood.

Jigsaw, the mindful approach to PSHE, provides our core programme and a comprehensive, carefully sequenced Scheme of Work. It provides consistency and progression while allowing the school to tailor teaching to individual needs, maturity, prior experience and level of understanding.

The overview of the programme can be made available to parents/carers through the school's usual communication channels. PSHE also contributes to Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes, safeguarding, equality, British Values and SMSC development.

3. Statutory RSE and Health Education

The DfE statutory guidance confirms that Relationships Education is compulsory for pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education is compulsory for pupils receiving secondary education. Health Education is compulsory in state-funded schools; independent schools are not subject to the Health Education duty but may use the guidance to inform provision. PSHE remains a requirement for independent schools.

The statutory guidance applies to alternative provision and states that particular thought should be given to the needs and vulnerabilities of pupils and to the adjustments needed. ALP Sittingbourne therefore integrated statutory Relationships Education/RSE and appropriate Health Education within the wider PSHE programme, alongside additional preparation-for-adulthood provision.

Key aspects of RSHE may be considered by Ofsted through areas including personal development, behaviour and welfare, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

4. Policy principles and guiding principles

ALP Sittingbourne will develop and deliver RSHE in line with the seven guiding principles in the DfE guidance. These principles inform curriculum planning, teaching, consultation, resource selection, safeguarding and evaluation.

Engagement with pupils – curriculum planning is informed by meaningful pupil voice so that learning is relevant, engaging and responsive to need.

Engagement and transparency with parents – parents/carers are consulted on policy development and review and are given clear information about content and access to teaching materials.

Positivity – teaching builds positive attitudes and skills and promotes healthy norms around relationships, health and mental health without normalising harmful behaviour.

Careful sequencing – statutory knowledge and skills are taught in a developmental sequence so that pupils are equipped before they encounter relevant experiences and risks.

Relevant and responsive – content is age-, stage- and developmentally appropriate, accessible and responsive to the needs and circumstances of ALP learners.

Skilled delivery of participative education – staff and approved external providers must have the knowledge, skills and confidence to teach sensitively, interactively and safely, with safeguarding procedures understood.

Whole-school approach – RSHE is supported by safeguarding, behaviour, equality and other relevant policies and by the wider culture and relationships of the school.

5. What do we teach when and who teaches it?

Whole-school approach: the Jigsaw Programme covers the main areas of PSHE across primary and secondary phases, including statutory Relationships Education, RSE and relevant Health Education. Because ALP learners may have gaps in schooling, uneven development or additional needs, some learners may access content from a different phase. Curriculum placement is determined by developmental readiness and individual need rather than chronological age alone.

At ALP Sittingbourne we individualise timetables. Each learner may therefore receive a different amount of PSHE each week, while statutory content is planned and sequenced so that learners receive the knowledge and skills appropriate to their stage of development.

Explicit lessons are reinforced through assemblies and collective worship, the Healthy Schools ethos, wellbeing measures, the Learning Charter, the praise and reward system, relationships across the school and opportunities to apply learning in everyday situations.

Class tutors and/or the dedicated PSHE team deliver weekly lessons. Lessons are normally 45 minutes, with additional curriculum opportunities where required.

The PSHE Lead is responsible for curriculum oversight, policy review, staff support and monitoring. Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring appropriate staffing, training, resources and safeguarding arrangements. Teachers remain responsible for knowing the needs of their learners and following the school's safeguarding procedures.

6. Age, stage and developmental appropriateness

The DfE guidance requires teaching to be age-, stage- and developmentally appropriate and accessible. ALP Sittingbourne does not use a one-size-fits-all model: individual profiles, prior learning, communication needs, cognitive development, emotional maturity and safeguarding considerations inform when and how sensitive content is taught.

The curriculum is sequenced so that protective knowledge is taught before pupils are likely to encounter relevant risks. Where emerging issues or local safeguarding concerns require content to be brought forward, the school will consider the developmental appropriateness of the teaching, inform parents/carers where appropriate and share relevant materials on request.

Sensitive topics will be taught using appropriate distancing techniques, agreed ground rules, accessible language, opportunities for anonymous questions where suitable, and careful consideration of pupils' personal experiences.

Puberty and changing bodies are taught in a planned, developmentally appropriate way and sufficiently early to prepare pupils for changes they may experience. Period education is taught before menstruation is likely to begin; the DfE notes that periods can start from around age eight.

Correct anatomical terminology is taught as part of health, safety and safeguarding education, including penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum and nipples, while respecting privacy and personal boundaries.

Primary sex education is not compulsory, although the DfE recommends that primary schools teach appropriate sex education in Years 5 and/or 6, alongside factual science content. ALP Sittingbourne will consider individual readiness before teaching non-statutory primary sex education.

Secondary RSE builds on primary relationships education. More sensitive sexual-health content is sequenced according to age, maturity, need and the statutory curriculum.

7. Relationships Education – Primary

Primary Relationships Education focuses on the building blocks of safe, respectful and healthy relationships. This includes families and people who care for pupils, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online safety and being safe.

Teaching recognises that families take many forms and should present different family structures positively and without stigmatising pupils because of their home circumstances.

Learners are taught about boundaries, privacy, bodily autonomy, respectful behaviour, bullying, abuse, seeking help and reporting concerns. They are taught that being a victim of abuse is never their fault.

8. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) – Secondary

Secondary RSE provides clear progression from primary Relationships Education and supports young people to develop healthy, safe and nurturing relationships. It includes families; respectful relationships including friendships; online and media; being safe; and intimate sexual relationships, including sexual health.

Teaching addresses consent, trust, mutual respect, boundaries, conflict and reconciliation, ending relationships, power dynamics, stereotypes, pornography, harmful sexual behaviour and ways in which online cultures and influencers can affect attitudes and behaviour.

The curriculum will explicitly address harmful ideas and behaviours where appropriate, including misogyny, coercive and controlling behaviour, sexual harassment, sexual violence, grooming and exploitation. Pupils will be supported to recognise harm and seek help.

The school will address relevant legal provisions factually when teaching related topics. This includes the age of consent, sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, FGM, forced marriage, the Online Safety Act, image-sharing laws, pornography, gambling, drugs, knives and weapons, hate crime, extremism/radicalisation, grooming/exploitation, medical consent and Gillick competence.

9. Online safety, wellbeing and modern digital harms

ALP Sittingbourne will move beyond a narrow 'online safety' approach and teach online wellbeing, respectful digital relationships, critical evaluation of online content and the impact of digital activity on mental and physical health.

Teaching will reflect contemporary risks relevant to pupils, particularly in secondary phases and, where appropriate, late primary. This includes AI-generated and manipulated content, deepfakes, sexual imagery and youth-produced sexual imagery, sextortion, grooming, online sexual harassment, misogynistic content and harmful online sub-cultures including incel communities.

Learners will also develop practical digital literacy: privacy and location settings, public versus private online spaces, data collection and targeted advertising, misinformation and disinformation, scams and fraud, online gaming and monetisation, gambling and gambling-like content, and how to report concerns and seek support.

Pupils will be taught that sexual or indecent images of people under 18, including AI-generated imagery, can have serious legal consequences and that they should seek help if an image of themselves has been shared. Teaching will be factual, protective and non-alarmist.

10. Health Education and Health & Wellbeing

Although Health Education is not a statutory duty for independent schools, ALP Sittingbourne use the DfE guidance to inform a comprehensive health and wellbeing curriculum. This includes mental wellbeing; online wellbeing; physical health and fitness; healthy eating; drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping; health protection and prevention; personal safety; first aid; and developing bodies.

Health education will support learners to make informed, positive choices and to recognise when they need help. Content includes sleep, nutrition, physical activity, hygiene, dental health, vaccination and immunisation, self-care, screening, sun safety and access to healthcare.

Secondary learners will be taught how to navigate the healthcare system, including the roles of GPs, A&E/minor injury services, pharmacies and sexual health services. Where appropriate, pupils will learn about medical consent, parental responsibility and Gillick competence.

The curriculum will address vaping and nicotine products, including nicotine pouches, as well as alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, counterfeit medicines and the misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medicines. Gambling and its potential physical, financial and mental-health harms will also be addressed.

11. Personal safety, first aid and risk

Personal safety is taught progressively and includes fire risks and other hazards, road and railway safety, water safety, risk management in increasingly independent situations, peer influence, conflict and violence, grooming and exploitation.

Where relevant to learners' stage and local context, the curriculum includes the law relating to knives and violence. Teaching will avoid fear-based approaches and will focus on practical safety, decision-making, trusted adults and support.

First aid provision includes appropriate responses to common injuries and ailments and, where developmentally appropriate, life-saving skills including CPR and the purpose and use of defibrillators.

12. Mental wellbeing, change, loss and bereavement

The curriculum develops emotional literacy, resilience, self-respect, self-worth, healthy coping strategies, relationships and help-seeking. Pupils learn that worry, feeling down, loneliness and difficult emotions can be part of life, while also learning to recognise when additional support may be needed.

Change and loss, including bereavement, are taught sensitively. Learners are supported to understand that grief is a natural response to bereavement and that people experience and express grief differently.

Secondary schools should consider suicide prevention carefully. ALP Sittingbourne will only address suicide directly where the content is appropriate to the learners concerned and staff have appropriate evidence-based training and, where necessary, advice from mental-health professionals. Teaching will not include methods or instructions and will avoid material that could signpost pupils towards harmful content.

Eating disorders and self-harm are specialised areas. Where these issues need to be addressed, the school will use reliable evidence-based resources, appropriate staff expertise and external support where necessary, with safeguarding and disclosure procedures in place.

13. Sex Education and parents' right to request withdrawal

Sex education is distinct from Relationships Education. Relationships Education may include protective content about sexual abuse, sexual violence, boundaries, inappropriate images and keeping safe, without describing sexual activity in detail.

Primary sex education is not compulsory. Where ALP Sittingbourne provide primary sex education beyond the science curriculum, parents/carers will be consulted about the content and informed of their right to request withdrawal. Requests to withdraw from primary sex education will be granted, except where the content forms part of the science curriculum.

In secondary education, parents/carers have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from some or all sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting a request, the Head Teacher will normally discuss the request with the parent/carer and, where appropriate, the pupil, including the purpose and benefits of the teaching and possible social and emotional impacts of withdrawal. The school will document the process.

In exceptional circumstances, a secondary request may be refused, for example where there are safeguarding concerns or particular vulnerabilities. From three terms before a pupil turns 16, the pupil may choose to opt back into sex education. Pupils will be made aware of this right.

Where a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, the school will provide appropriate and purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. Parents/carers do not have a right to withdraw a pupil from Relationships Education, Health Education, or science curriculum content.

14. Parents/carers: consultation, transparency and access to materials

ALP Sittingbourne will proactively engage and consult parents/carers when developing and reviewing the RSHE policy. The purpose and value of RSHE in promoting wellbeing and preventing harm will be communicated clearly.

Parents/carers will be informed about the content of RSHE and, where appropriate, sensitive topics will be signposted in advance. Parents/carers may request access to curriculum materials used to teach RSHE. The school will provide access in a practical format, subject to copyright requirements, and will acknowledge external providers' authorship where relevant.

The school will use appropriate channels such as the school website, parent communications, information sessions/parent meetings and curriculum overviews to promote understanding of RSHE. Parents/carers are not able to veto statutory curriculum content, but their views will inform policy development and review.

Where curriculum content changes in response to emerging needs or safeguarding concerns, the school will consider whether parents/carers need to be informed in advance and will share relevant materials on request.

15. Inclusion and SEND

ALP Sittingbourne are committed to ensuring that RSHE is accessible to all learners, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. The DfE guidance requires governors/trustees and schools to ensure teaching is accessible to pupils with SEND.

Teaching is differentiated and personalised through individual learner profiles, communication systems, visual supports, adapted language, repetition, modelling, small-group teaching and one-to-one work where appropriate. Staff will consider sensory, communication, cognitive, social and emotional needs and any relevant safeguarding vulnerabilities.

The curriculum will not be reduced to a lower entitlement simply because a learner has SEND. Instead, statutory knowledge and protective skills will be taught using appropriate adaptations and at a suitable developmental level.

16. Equality, respect and LGBT content

This policy supports the school's Equality Policy. ALP Sittingbourne complies with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty where applicable, and ensures that RSHE is taught without discrimination or harassment.

Pupils should understand equality and respect and, by the end of secondary education, learn about the protected characteristics identified in the DfE guidance. Teaching will include relevant facts and law concerning biological sex and the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, presented accurately, respectfully and without endorsing a contested view as fact.

Primary teaching may include different family structures, including same-sex parents, as part of teaching about families and healthy relationships. At secondary level, stable and healthy same-sex relationships are integrated into the RSHE programme alongside other relationships.

ALP Sittingbourne promotes respect for every individual and recognises that learners and families may hold different beliefs. Where beliefs and curriculum content are in tension, teaching remains factual, lawful, age-appropriate, respectful and focused on pupils' safety, wellbeing, equality and preparation for adult life.

17. Safeguarding, confidentiality and difficult questions

RSHE is a safeguarding curriculum. Staff must follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures if a pupil discloses abuse, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, unsafe relationships, online harm or another safeguarding concern.

Teachers should not promise confidentiality. Pupils should understand that staff may need to share information with safeguarding colleagues or other appropriate professionals where there is a concern for safety.

Staff will establish clear ground rules, use distancing techniques and provide opportunities for anonymous questions where appropriate. Teachers should answer questions factually and at a level appropriate to the class. Questions about content outside the school's planned programme, or about sex education from which a pupil has been withdrawn, will be handled by the teacher/PSHE Lead in line with this policy and safeguarding requirements.

Staff will take particular care with sensitive content and with pupils who may have experienced trauma or abuse. Teaching should support rather than alarm pupils.

18. External providers and resources

External organisations may enhance RSHE delivery, but ALP Sittingbourne remains responsible for the content and manner of teaching. The school will check the credentials of visitors/providers and ensure resources are accurate, age- and stage-appropriate, accessible, unbiased and consistent with this policy.

External providers will be expected to share lesson plans/materials in advance and to understand the school's safeguarding and reporting procedures. Confidentiality arrangements will be clear before delivery.

The school will avoid resources that promote harmful products or that take a strong partisan position on contested issues. Parents/carers will be able to view materials used to teach RSHE.

19. Additional PSHE and Learning Opportunities

Whilst Jigsaw forms the basis of PSHE, ALP Sittingbourne offers additional lessons, pathways and qualifications to enhance personal and social development and preparation for adulthood. These may also provide alternative routes into PSHE learning for learners who do not engage effectively with a particular lesson format.

Additional provision includes, but is not limited to:

New Horizons – Me and My World

Key Steps – Identity, Community and Health

Towards Independence – multiple units

Personal and Social Development – Community, Finance, Leisure, Healthy Lifestyles

Developing Enterprise Capabilities

Employability Skills

Life, Work and Well-Being qualifications

Well-Being – sexual health, stress, mental health, substance misuse, alcohol, personal safety and nutrition/health

20. Intent, Implementation and Impact

Intent: We strive towards a coherently planned curriculum that equips young people for the real world. PSHE supports the wider development of learners and addresses challenges and opportunities they may commonly face. Needs are identified through initial assessments, learner profiles, wellbeing measures and ongoing safeguarding and pastoral information.

Implementation: Effective delivery depends on teachers and tutors who are confident and appropriately trained. Leaders recognise that poorly taught PSHE can cause harm. The PSHE Lead and senior leaders therefore support staff with training, high-quality resources, curriculum guidance and opportunities to develop subject knowledge.

Impact: The intended impact is that young people are better prepared for life now and for their next steps into further education, employment, training and adult life. Learners should develop knowledge, practical skills, confidence, resilience and the ability to make informed, safe and respectful choices.

21. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The PSHE Lead and senior leaders will monitor the implementation and impact of PSHE/RSHE through curriculum reviews, planning scrutiny, lesson visits, learner voice, staff feedback, assessment information, work scrutiny and safeguarding/pastoral information where appropriate.

Monitoring will consider whether statutory content is covered, sequenced and accessible; whether teaching is age-, stage- and developmentally appropriate; whether pupils can recall and apply key knowledge and skills; and whether resources and external provision remain suitable.

Pupil voice and parent/carers feedback will inform evaluation and policy review. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where there are changes to statutory guidance, legislation, safeguarding priorities or significant changes in the curriculum.

22. Related policies and guidance

Department for Education: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance, July 2025 (in force from September 2026)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (statutory guidance)

SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years

Alternative Provision statutory guidance

Equality Act 2010 and relevant equality guidance

Behaviour in Schools

Preventing and Tackling Bullying

Teaching Online Safety in Schools

Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance

Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools

Relevant national curriculum programmes of study, including science, computing, citizenship and physical education

ALP Sittingbourne Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

ALP Sittingbourne Behaviour Policy

ALP Sittingbourne Equality Policy

ALP Sittingbourne Curriculum Framework and PSHE pathways

Jigsaw PSHE curriculum and relevant statutory mapping documents

ALP Sittingbourne PSHE policy (including RSE) – September 2026