

Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) Policy

2026 - 2027

Policy owner	Headteacher / Proprietor
Applies from	1 September 2026
Applies to	All learners receiving education at Bay Learning Academy CIC
Approved by	Headteacher / Proprietor
Next formal review	By 31 July 2027, or earlier if law or guidance changes

1. Policy statement

Bay Learning Academy CIC provides commissioned non-school additional provision. Although Bay is not a maintained school, it voluntarily adopts and follows the Department for Education statutory guidance Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, for introduction on 1 September 2026, as its operating standard. This policy should therefore be read as Bay's commitment to conform to that guidance wherever it is relevant to the age, developmental stage and needs of our learners.

Bay will also work with each learner's commissioning school and local authority so that the placement supports their legal and curriculum responsibilities. If a commissioning agreement or the home school's policy contains an additional lawful requirement, Bay will work with the commissioner to meet it. Any material difference will be recorded and agreed.

PSHE and RSHE at Bay are preventative, inclusive and safeguarding-led. Teaching equips learners with accurate knowledge, practical skills, confidence and routes to support so they can form respectful relationships, protect their health and wellbeing, participate in society and prepare for adult life.

2. Purpose and aims

The programme aims to help learners:

- recognise healthy, respectful and safe relationships in person and online;
- understand consent, boundaries, equality, dignity and the law;
- identify abuse, coercion, exploitation, harassment, discrimination and harmful behaviour, and know how to report concerns;
- make informed decisions about physical health, mental wellbeing, sexual and reproductive health and substance use;
- develop resilience, self-respect, empathy, communication, critical thinking and help-seeking skills;
- understand economic wellbeing, careers, employment, money, risk and responsible participation in society; and

- receive teaching that is factual, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, trauma-aware and accessible.

3. Scope and definitions

This policy applies to all Bay staff, visiting professionals and learners. It covers planned lessons, tutorials, pastoral work, enrichment, targeted intervention and relevant learning arising from current or safeguarding issues.

PSHE is the wider curriculum through which learners develop knowledge and skills for health and wellbeing, relationships, economic wellbeing and life in modern Britain.

RSHE comprises Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education. At Bay, these elements are normally taught within a coherent PSHE programme rather than as isolated topics.

Sex education in this policy means content within RSE that goes beyond Relationships Education, Health Education and the science curriculum. It includes learning about intimate sexual relationships, contraception, sexual health and pregnancy choices.

4. Legal and guidance framework

Bay has written this policy with regard to the following legislation and current national guidance:

- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019;
- Children and Social Work Act 2017, sections 34 and 35;
- Education Act 1996, sections 403 and 405, and Education Act 2002, section 80A, where applicable to commissioning schools and learners;
- Department for Education statutory guidance: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, revised July 2025 for introduction on 1 September 2026;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, in force at the time of delivery;
- Human Rights Act 1998; and
- relevant safeguarding, online safety, behaviour, anti-bullying, SEND, equality and data protection requirements.

The statutory guidance is issued to schools under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and section 403 of the Education Act 1996. Bay's status means those duties may sit formally with a learner's commissioning school rather than Bay itself. Bay nevertheless adopts the guidance as the minimum benchmark for its own provision and will record a clear, learner-centred reason if an individual programme needs to depart from a "should" statement in the guidance.

5. Curriculum principles

- Knowledge is carefully sequenced, revisited and built on from each learner's actual starting point.
- Teaching is age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate; age alone does not determine readiness.
- Content is factual, evidence-informed and taught with reference to the law.

- Learners encounter a range of lawful perspectives without any contested belief being presented as undisputed fact.
- Teaching is inclusive and does not stigmatise learners because of sex, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, or any other protected characteristic.
- Staff challenge everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia, sexual harassment, harmful stereotypes and discriminatory language while avoiding assumptions about individual boys, girls or other learners.
- Online and offline life are treated as connected. Learners practise how to recognise manipulation, seek help, report content and make safe choices.
- Lessons do not require personal disclosure. Ground rules, distancing techniques and anonymous questions are used for sensitive content.

6. Curriculum planning and individualisation

The PSHE/RSHE lead maps the programme against the DfE end-of-secondary expectations and the learner's home-school curriculum. Planning takes account of age, prior knowledge, attendance history, SEND, communication needs, trauma, exploitation risk, local context and the expected length of placement.

Baseline assessment may use low-stakes questions, discussion, scenario work or self-evaluation. Staff do not ask learners to reveal personal experiences. Gaps in essential safeguarding knowledge are prioritised, while avoiding unnecessary repetition or content that is unsuitable for the learner's developmental stage.

7. Core curriculum entitlement

Curriculum area	Core knowledge and skills	Bay delivery emphasis
Families and committed relationships	Different family structures; stable and committed relationships; marriage and its legal status; freely entered relationships; parenting responsibilities; recognising when family or other relationships are unsafe.	Sensitive to lived experience; no assumption that one family form fits every learner.
Respectful relationships	Trust, honesty, kindness, boundaries, privacy, consent, conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships; bullying; equality; stereotypes; sexual harassment and sexual violence.	Explicit challenge to sexism, misogyny, homophobia, prejudice and harmful gender stereotypes.
Consent, safety and the law	Active, freely given and reversible consent; age of consent; coercion and control; grooming; exploitation; domestic abuse; forced marriage; honour-based abuse; FGM; reporting and support.	Scenario-based practice, trusted-adult routes and clear safeguarding responses.
Online and media	Rights and responsibilities online; privacy and data; harmful contact and content; cyberbullying; pornography; sexual image sharing; scams, sextortion, grooming, online gambling and reporting.	Includes AI-generated or manipulated sexual images, deepfakes and the permanence and onward sharing of content.
Intimate and sexual relationships	Healthy intimacy; resisting and not applying pressure; choices to delay sex; contraception; pregnancy and pregnancy choices; fertility; miscarriage; STIs including HIV; confidential services.	Medically and legally accurate, impartial and non-judgemental teaching.
Mental wellbeing	Emotions; connection and loneliness; resilience; anxiety and depression; early warning signs; self-care; help-seeking; self-harm and suicide prevention.	Safe teaching plan; no methods, graphic material or romanticising; immediate safeguarding response to concerns.



Physical health	Activity, healthy eating, sleep, hygiene, dental health, prevention, immunisation, screening, puberty, menstruation, reproductive health, first aid, CPR and defibrillators.	Practical, accessible learning linked to reliable health services.
Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping	Legal and illegal substances; medicines; addiction; risk, law and harm reduction; links with mental health, exploitation and sexual decision-making.	Current local risk information and clear referral pathways.
Economic wellbeing and careers	Strengths and aspirations; pathways; employment rights and responsibilities; budgeting, saving, credit, debt, gambling, fraud, pensions and financial exploitation.	Preparation for adulthood, independence and realistic next steps.
Citizenship and community	Rights, responsibilities, democracy, equality, respectful debate, media literacy, community participation, British values and resisting extremism and radicalisation.	Balanced discussion and safe challenge, linked to learners' real contexts.

8. Required 2026 safeguarding emphases

8.1 Misogyny, sexism and positive relationships

Teaching will address misogynistic attitudes, everyday sexism, sexual harassment, coercive behaviour and myths that normalise inequality or violence. Learners will explore how power, status, peer groups, influencers and online communities can shape attitudes. Staff will model respectful behaviour and use positive examples of masculinity and allyship without suggesting that harmful behaviour is inevitable in boys or young men.

8.2 Pornography and harmful sexual content

Learners will be taught, at an appropriate stage, that pornography can present a distorted picture of bodies, consent and sexual behaviour and may affect expectations, wellbeing and treatment of others. Teaching will include the law on sexual images of children, pressures to create or share images, non-consensual sharing, reporting, blocking and support. Staff will not use pornographic or graphic material.

8.3 Artificial intelligence, manipulated images and online abuse

The programme will address AI-generated or manipulated images, including sexual deepfakes, impersonation, misinformation, image-based abuse and sextortion. Learners will understand that creating or sharing such material can cause serious harm and may be unlawful, and will practise how to preserve evidence, report content and seek trusted help without blame.

8.4 Mental health, self-harm and suicide prevention

Bay will maintain a written plan for safe teaching about self-harm and suicide prevention. Content will focus on hope, prevention, recognising signs, protective factors and routes to immediate help. It will not include methods, graphic or emotive images, sensational accounts or language that normalises or romanticises suicide. Staff delivering this content must have appropriate knowledge, preparation and safeguarding support. Any concern about a learner is referred immediately under the Safeguarding Policy.

8.5 Sexual harassment, violence and harmful sexual behaviour

Learners are taught that sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable and are not an inevitable part of growing up. Reports are taken seriously, responded to under safeguarding procedures and never dismissed as banter. Teaching supports learners to recognise harmful behaviour, understand bystander responsibilities and seek help for themselves or another person.

9. Equality, LGBT inclusion, sex and gender

Bay complies with the Equality Act 2010 in its own practice and supports commissioning schools to meet their duties. Teaching reflects that everyone is entitled to dignity, safety and equal treatment. LGBT content is integrated at a timely and developmentally appropriate point rather than treated as a single isolated lesson.

Learners are taught factual information about sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment, the applicable law and the existence of different views. Discussion is clear, sensitive and respectful. Staff do not direct a learner towards any particular identity, do not invite disclosure, and do not present a contested view as established fact. Any individual pastoral or safeguarding matter is handled privately under the relevant Bay policy and current government guidance.

10. SEND, accessibility and vulnerability

All learners must be able to access PSHE and RSHE. Staff will make reasonable adjustments and may adapt language, pace, examples, visuals, repetition, group size, communication method and assessment. Teaching is personalised without removing essential knowledge about safety, consent, health, equality and help-seeking.

Planning recognises that some learners with SEND, social, emotional or mental health needs, disrupted education or previous trauma may be more vulnerable to bullying, exploitation, abuse or misunderstanding of social cues. Content is delivered sensitively and at the learner's developmental stage, with input from the SENCO, DSL, family and commissioner where appropriate.

11. Teaching sensitive and controversial issues

- Staff establish ground rules and explain the limits of confidentiality before sensitive learning.
- Questions are answered honestly and in an age-appropriate way. A question may be deferred for an individual response if answering publicly would be unsafe or unsuitable.
- Staff use distancing techniques, fictional scenarios and anonymous question boxes where helpful.
- Materials are checked in advance for accuracy, bias, age suitability, SEND accessibility and safeguarding risk.
- Political, moral, religious and other perspectives may be explored through balanced discussion, while the law and safeguarding expectations remain clear.
- No learner is asked to demonstrate personal experience, state their sexuality or gender identity, or disclose private family information.

12. Safeguarding, disclosures and confidentiality

PSHE and RSHE are part of Bay's preventative safeguarding curriculum. A learner may disclose abuse, exploitation, self-harm, suicidal thoughts or another concern during or after a lesson. Staff must follow the Safeguarding Policy and report the concern promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy. Staff must not investigate, promise secrecy or agree to keep a disclosure confidential.

Learners will be told in accessible language that staff respect privacy but must share information when necessary to keep someone safe. Information is shared only with those who need it, recorded factually and managed in line with data protection and safeguarding requirements.

Where planned content may affect a learner known to have experienced trauma or abuse, staff consult the DSL before delivery and consider adjustments, advance notice, an alternative safe activity or additional support. Essential safeguarding knowledge will still be provided in an appropriate way.

13. External visitors and resources

External visitors may enhance but do not replace teaching by Bay staff. Before a session, Bay will:

- check the visitor's identity, credentials and organisational suitability;
- review the lesson plan and all materials in advance;
- confirm that content is accurate, inclusive, age-appropriate and accessible;
- agree boundaries, confidentiality and the handling of safeguarding reports;
- ensure a Bay member of staff remains responsible for the session; and
- evaluate the learning and any concerns afterwards.

Commercial, campaigning or externally produced materials will not be used merely because they are popular or freely available. The PSHE/RSHE lead assures quality and records significant resource decisions.

14. Parent and carer engagement

Bay will work openly with parents and carers and, where relevant, the commissioning school. The current policy and curriculum overview will be available without charge. Parents and carers will be given reasonable information about what is taught and when, opportunities to ask questions and, where practical, examples of planned resources. Their views will inform review, while Bay retains responsibility for a safe, lawful and inclusive curriculum.

15. Right to request withdrawal from sex education

There is no right to withdraw a learner from Relationships Education, Health Education, safeguarding education or relevant science content. A parent or carer may request withdrawal from some or all sex education delivered as part of RSE.

Requests should be made to the Headteacher. Bay will liaise with the learner's home school because the statutory responsibility and final decision may rest with that school. Before a decision, the Headteacher or home-school headteacher, as appropriate, should discuss the request with the parent or carer and, taking account of age and understanding, the learner. The discussion will clarify the content, benefits and possible effects of withdrawal and will be recorded.

Except in exceptional circumstances, a request should be respected until three terms before the learner turns 16. From that point, if the learner wishes to receive sex education, arrangements should be made for them to receive it during one of those terms. A learner who is withdrawn will receive appropriate, purposeful education and will not be left unsupervised or disadvantaged.

16. Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher / Proprietor

- approves the policy and ensures sufficient leadership, staffing, time and resources;
- ensures Bay's voluntary adoption of the statutory guidance is implemented consistently;
- works with commissioning schools on responsibilities, consultation and withdrawal requests; and
- ensures complaints and safeguarding concerns are handled under the correct procedure.

PSHE/RSHE lead

- maps, sequences and reviews the curriculum against the 2026 guidance;
- quality-assures resources, visitors, assessment and staff development;
- ensures the suicide-prevention teaching plan and other sensitive-content safeguards are current; and
- uses learner voice, parent feedback, commissioner information and local risk data to improve provision.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

- advises on preventative content, known vulnerabilities and safe delivery;
- supports staff with disclosures and referrals; and
- helps identify emerging safeguarding themes that require curriculum response.

Teaching staff and visitors

- follow this policy, agreed curriculum plans and safeguarding procedures;
- deliver factual, inclusive and accessible teaching within their competence;
- do not express personal beliefs in a way that pressures or shames learners; and
- report concerns, gaps in resources or training needs promptly.

17. Staff competence and support

Staff must be suitably prepared for the content they teach. Induction and continuing development will cover curriculum expectations, equality, SEND, handling questions, boundaries, safeguarding disclosures, online harms, consent and safe teaching about self-harm and suicide. A staff member who does not feel competent to deliver a topic must tell the PSHE/RSHE lead in advance so support or alternative delivery can be arranged.

18. Assessment, monitoring and evaluation

Assessment measures knowledge, understanding and application rather than personal values or disclosure. It may include baseline and exit questions, scenarios, quizzes, discussion, written work, self-evaluation and observed application of skills. Staff use assessment to identify misconceptions, safeguarding gaps and the need for further teaching or support.

The PSHE/RSHE lead monitors curriculum coverage, learner progress, accessibility, teaching quality, resource suitability, attendance, learner voice and any themes arising from safeguarding or behaviour records. Monitoring information is reported to the Headteacher and used to revise plans. The effectiveness of the policy is evaluated at least annually.

19. Complaints and concerns

Questions about curriculum content should first be raised with the PSHE/RSHE lead or Headteacher. Formal complaints are handled under Bay's Complaints Policy. A safeguarding concern must be reported immediately under the Safeguarding Policy and is not delayed while a complaint is considered.

20. Related Bay policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;

- Online Safety and Harms Policy;
- Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Equality Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Data Protection and Communication Policy;
- Complaints Policy; and
- First Aid and Medications policies.

21. Review and publication

This policy applies from 1 September 2026. It will be published or otherwise made readily available and provided free of charge on request. It will be reviewed by 31 July 2027 and sooner if legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding expectations, commissioning arrangements or learner needs change. Parents, carers, learners, staff and commissioners will be invited to contribute appropriately to review.

Appendix 1: implementation checklist

- Curriculum mapping confirms coverage of the 2026 DfE expectations.
- Individual starting points, SEND and vulnerability are reflected in planning.
- Parents/carers and learners have suitable opportunities to contribute.
- Resources and visitors are quality-assured before use.
- Ground rules and confidentiality limits are explained.
- The DSL is consulted on sensitive or cohort-specific safeguarding content.
- A safe-teaching plan is in place for self-harm and suicide prevention.
- Withdrawal requests are handled with the home school and purposeful alternative education is arranged.
- Assessment and learner voice inform curriculum improvement.
- The policy and curriculum overview are accessible and current.