

Part of the Branches Education Group



RSHE POLICY



Approved By	Rebecca Warhurst	Head Teacher	Aug 2026
Amendments Made			
Linked Policies	Curriculum Policy		
Signed	<i>R Warhurst</i>	Head Teacher	Aug 2026
	<i>L De Hayes</i>	Governance Chair	Aug 2026
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1.0 BACKGROUND

This policy sets out the framework for Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) at The Willows School. Its purpose is to provide clarity regarding how the school's Relationships and Sex Education curriculum is planned, delivered, monitored and reviewed.

RSHE forms an important part of the school's wider Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic Education (PSHCEE) curriculum. It supports pupils in developing the knowledge, understanding, skills and values needed to build positive relationships, make informed decisions, respect themselves and others, and maintain their physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

The school recognises that effective RSHE contributes to pupils' personal development and safeguarding by helping them understand healthy relationships, personal boundaries, consent, online safety and how to seek support when needed.

1.1 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- PSHCEE: Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic Education.
- RSHE: Relationships, Sex and Health Education.
- Health Education: Learning about physical health, mental wellbeing, personal safety, healthy lifestyles and emotional wellbeing.
- Relationships Education: Learning about the social, emotional, physical and legal aspects of human relationships. This includes friendships, family life and relationships with other children and adults.
- RSHE (Relationships and Sex Education): Learning about the social, emotional and physical aspects of growing up, including relationships, human sexuality, sexual health, consent, personal boundaries and staying safe.
- Sex Education: Learning about human reproduction, adolescence, sexual relationships, pregnancy, birth, contraception and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in an age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate manner.

See also the school's Curriculum Policy.

1.2 Statutory Guidance

The Willows School's Relationships and Sex Education provision is informed by the Department for Education's statutory guidance, *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education*, which came into effect from 1 September 2026. The school has regard to this guidance when planning, delivering and reviewing its RSHE curriculum.

Although the statutory Health Education requirements do not apply to independent schools in the same way as they do to maintained schools and academies, The Willows School recognises the importance of promoting pupils' physical health, mental wellbeing, personal safety and healthy relationships through its PSHCEE and RSHE curriculum.

The school also has regard to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, including guidance relating to safeguarding, child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence, pupil welfare and online safety.

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and any subsequent updates.
- NSPCC *Talk Relationships: A Whole School Approach Framework* (2024).
- The Equality Act 2010 and the school's duties to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- The Independent School Standards (ISS) as set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and any subsequent amendments.

The school's RSHE curriculum supports its safeguarding responsibilities by helping pupils develop the knowledge, understanding and skills required to build healthy and respectful relationships, recognise and respond to risk, understand consent and personal boundaries, stay safe online, and know how to seek help and support when concerns arise. Teaching is delivered in an age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and inclusive manner, taking account of pupils' individual needs, abilities and vulnerabilities.

1.3 Consultation with Parents and Carers

The Willows School recognises that parents and carers are the primary educators of their children in matters relating to relationships, sex and health. We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that our RSHE curriculum supports pupils' personal development, wellbeing and safety.

In accordance with statutory guidance, the school will consult with parents and carers regarding its approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE). We will provide clear information about the content of the curriculum, how it is delivered, and the resources used to support teaching and learning.

The school will review its RSHE policy and curriculum provision annually to ensure that it remains effective, relevant and responsive to the needs of pupils. Following review, draft policies will be made available to parents and carers via the school website, and a consultation period will be provided to enable feedback before final publication.

Parents and carers will be offered opportunities to learn more about the school's RSHE curriculum and to discuss any questions or concerns they may have. The school will notify parents and carers when specific RSHE units are due to be taught and will provide an outline of the content to be covered. Where appropriate, parents and carers will be able to view examples of teaching materials and resources, including those used to support learning about sensitive topics.

Parents and carers will receive information about their rights in relation to withdrawal from the non-statutory elements of Sex Education. This information will be provided to all new families as part of the admissions and induction process and will be made available on the school's website.

The school values and respects the views of parents and carers and will carefully consider any concerns raised. However, the school is responsible for determining the content and organisation of its curriculum and must ensure that it meets its legal and safeguarding responsibilities, while reflecting the needs of its pupils.

Information on pupils' progress in relation to personal development, relationships and preparation for adulthood may be discussed through annual review meetings, EHCP reviews, reports to parents and other planned opportunities for home-school communication.

1.4 Legal Obligations and the Parental Right to Withdraw

Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) forms an important part of the curriculum at The Willows School. Through RSHE, pupils develop the knowledge, understanding and skills required to build healthy relationships, stay safe, maintain positive physical and mental health, and prepare for adult life.

Under current statutory requirements, all schools must provide Relationships Education and, where applicable, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE). Schools must also ensure that pupils receive appropriate teaching about health, wellbeing, personal safety and safeguarding.

Parents and carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from:

- Relationships Education.
- Any content that forms part of the National Curriculum for Science.
- Health-related aspects of the curriculum that are delivered as part of statutory requirements.

The Science curriculum includes teaching about human development, reproduction, puberty, hormones, communicable diseases and sexually transmitted infections, where appropriate to pupils' age and stage of development.

Parents and carers may request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the non-statutory Sex Education elements of the curriculum that are delivered outside of the Science curriculum. Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing to the Headteacher.

Before granting a request, the Headteacher or an appropriate member of staff will discuss the request with parents or carers to ensure that they fully understand the nature and purpose of the curriculum, and the potential implications of withdrawal. In accordance with statutory guidance, the school will keep a record of all requests for withdrawal and any related discussions.

Where a pupil is withdrawn from non-statutory Sex Education, the school will provide appropriate and purposeful alternative educational activities during the period of withdrawal.

In line with statutory guidance, if a pupil in the secondary age range wishes to receive Sex Education rather than remain withdrawn by their parents or carers, the school will arrange for the pupil to receive Sex Education during one of the three terms before they reach the age of 16.

Where the school provides education for pupils aged 16 to 19, Sex Education may continue to form part of the wider preparation for adulthood curriculum, including learning related to relationships, personal safety, independence, health and wellbeing. Parents and carers do not have the right to withdraw post-16 pupils from this provision.

Further information can be found in Appendix 2: Compulsory Aspects of RSHE, which summarises the statutory requirements applicable to different phases of education and age groups.

1.5 Aims and Intent of our RSHE Curriculum

In developing and delivering our RSHE curriculum, The Willows School aims to:

- Provide a broad, balanced, age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate RSHE curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils.

- Meet all statutory requirements relating to Relationships, Sex and Health Education and fulfil the school's safeguarding responsibilities.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers, taking account of their views and providing opportunities for consultation and engagement.
- Ensure that teaching is based on accurate, up-to-date and evidence-informed information from reliable and reputable sources.
- Use high-quality resources that are appropriate to pupils' ages, developmental stages, individual needs and abilities.
- Support pupils to develop positive relationships based on mutual respect, kindness, trust and understanding.
- Develop pupils' understanding of personal safety, consent, boundaries, healthy relationships and how to recognise and respond to situations that may place them at risk.
- Enable pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe both offline and online, including when using digital technologies, social media and artificial intelligence.
- Ensure pupils know where, when and how to seek help and support for themselves or others when concerns arise.
- Provide a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment in which pupils feel confident to ask questions, discuss sensitive issues appropriately and challenge misconceptions.
- Promote pupils' physical health, emotional wellbeing, mental health and preparation for adulthood.
- Support pupils to build upon and retain knowledge over time so that they are well prepared for future education, employment, independent living and positive participation in society.
- Promote equality, inclusion and respect for others, celebrating diversity and challenging prejudice, discrimination and harmful stereotypes.

See Appendix 1: Summary of How We Deliver the RSHE Curriculum, which outlines the planned curriculum content and progression in line with Department for Education guidance.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the strategic leadership, organisation and quality assurance of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) across the school.

The Headteacher will ensure that:

- RSHE is delivered in accordance with statutory guidance, safeguarding requirements and this policy.
- Staff have the appropriate knowledge, skills, confidence and training required to plan and deliver high-quality RSHE.
- Appropriate resources are available and used effectively to support teaching and learning.
- Pupils receive an age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and inclusive curriculum that meets their needs.

- The effectiveness of RSHE provision is monitored and evaluated, including pupil progress and outcomes.
- Requests from parents and carers to withdraw a child from non-statutory elements of Sex Education are managed in accordance with statutory guidance, with suitable alternative educational provision made available where necessary.

2.2 The PSHCEE Lead

The PSHCEE Lead is responsible for the planning, development, implementation and ongoing review of the RSHE curriculum.

The PSHCEE Lead will:

- Ensure that RSHE is effectively planned, sequenced and delivered as part of the wider PSHCEE curriculum.
- Develop and maintain long-term plans, schemes of learning and curriculum resources.
- Support colleagues in the planning and delivery of high-quality RSHE lessons.
- Monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within RSHE.
- Ensure that content is appropriate to pupils' ages, developmental stages, individual needs and abilities.
- Liaise with external agencies and visiting professionals who contribute to RSHE provision.
- Work closely with subject leaders to ensure that RSHE complements learning delivered through other curriculum areas.
- Work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that curriculum content supports the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

2.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will work closely with the Headteacher, senior leaders and PSHCEE Lead to ensure that the RSHE curriculum supports the school's safeguarding arrangements.

The DSL will:

- Advise on safeguarding considerations within the RSHE curriculum.
- Help ensure that teaching materials and learning activities are appropriate and sensitive to pupils' individual circumstances and needs.
- Support staff in responding to safeguarding concerns, disclosures or incidents that arise through RSHE lessons.
- Ensure that RSHE contributes to pupils' understanding of healthy relationships, personal safety, consent, online safety and how to seek help when needed.
- Promote a trauma-informed and safeguarding-centred approach to curriculum delivery, taking account of pupils' backgrounds, experiences and vulnerabilities.

2.4 Teachers

All staff responsible for delivering RSHE have a duty to promote a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment.

Teachers delivering RSHE will:

- Deliver lessons in accordance with the school's curriculum and policy.
- Provide accurate, balanced and age-appropriate information.
- Encourage respectful discussion and support pupils to ask questions confidently and appropriately.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and follow safeguarding procedures at all times.
- Be alert to any safeguarding concerns or disclosures arising during lessons and report concerns in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Engage in training and professional development to maintain their knowledge, skills and confidence in delivering RSHE.

2.5 The Proprietor and School Governance

The Proprietor is responsible for ensuring that appropriate oversight and governance arrangements are in place for the effective delivery of RSHE.

Through the school's governance structure, the Proprietor and Governance Chair will:

- Monitor compliance with statutory requirements, safeguarding expectations and this policy.
- Receive reports on the quality, effectiveness and impact of RSHE provision.
- Provide challenge and support to the Headteacher and senior leadership team in relation to curriculum delivery, pupil outcomes and safeguarding.
- Ensure that appropriate systems are in place for monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement.
- Review the outcomes of policy reviews and curriculum evaluations.
- Report to the Proprietor on the effectiveness of RSHE provision and confirm that statutory and regulatory requirements continue to be met.

4.0 Use of External Professionals

The Willows School recognises the value that external professionals and specialist agencies can bring to the delivery of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). External contributors may be used to enhance learning by providing specialist expertise, current knowledge and alternative approaches to engaging pupils.

The school may draw upon support from a range of agencies and professionals, including healthcare professionals, school nurses, NHS services, safeguarding specialists, therapists and recognised organisations such as the NSPCC. Such contributions may support curriculum delivery, staff training, awareness raising and the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding.

External professionals will complement, rather than replace, the planned RSHE curriculum delivered by school staff. A member of school staff will always be present during sessions delivered by external visitors and will remain responsible for pupil welfare, behaviour management and safeguarding throughout.

Prior to any visit, the school will:

- Verify the suitability, qualifications and credentials of the individual or organisation.
- Ensure that all required safeguarding and vetting checks have been completed in accordance with school policies and procedures.
- Review and approve any learning materials, resources and lesson content to be used.
- Ensure that teaching content is age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and suitable for the needs of the pupils involved.
- Confirm that the content supports and complements the school's planned curriculum and safeguarding objectives.

All external contributors will be made aware of the school's safeguarding procedures, professional boundaries, confidentiality expectations, information-sharing arrangements and reporting responsibilities. Any safeguarding concerns or disclosures arising from sessions delivered by external professionals must be reported immediately in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Where external agencies are already involved in supporting individual pupils, the Headteacher, PSHCEE Lead, DSL or other appropriate staff may consult with those professionals to ensure that curriculum content is delivered in a manner that is safe, appropriate and responsive to individual needs.

5.0 Safeguarding and Confidentiality

Safeguarding is central to all aspects of school life and underpins the delivery of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). Through the curriculum, pupils are supported to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to keep themselves safe, maintain healthy relationships, recognise risk and seek help when necessary. This includes learning about personal safety, healthy relationships, consent, online safety and risks within the wider community.

The school recognises that some pupils may have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), trauma, abuse, neglect, loss or other significant challenges. Staff delivering RSHE will take a sensitive, inclusive and trauma-informed approach to teaching, recognising that pupils may respond differently to certain topics depending on their individual experiences and circumstances.

The planning and delivery of RSHE are undertaken with appropriate oversight from the PSHCEE Lead and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL will support the selection of curriculum content, teaching approaches and resources, taking account of local safeguarding issues, emerging risks and the needs of individual pupils. The DSL will also work collaboratively with internal and external professionals where additional advice or specialist support is required.

The school recognises that discussions within RSHE lessons may occasionally lead to disclosures of abuse, exploitation, neglect or other safeguarding concerns. Staff delivering RSHE must remain vigilant at all times and follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy without exception. Any safeguarding concern, disclosure or welfare issue arising during or following a lesson must be reported promptly to the DSL in accordance with school procedures.

While staff will encourage open discussion and create a safe environment in which pupils can ask questions, they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. Pupils will be informed that where information is disclosed which suggests that they or another person may be at risk of harm, staff have a duty to share this information with appropriate safeguarding personnel.

Staff will ensure that pupils understand:

- How to seek help for themselves or others.
- How to raise a concern or make a report.
- Who they can speak to within school.
- What may happen if they disclose a safeguarding concern.
- How concerns relating to friends, peers or online activity can be reported.

Staff will never promise a pupil that information relating to abuse, exploitation or significant harm will be kept secret. The welfare of the child will always be the school's primary consideration, and all concerns will be managed in line with safeguarding legislation, statutory guidance and school procedures.

6.0 RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS

The PSHCEE Lead will provide guidance and support to staff regarding the effective management of questions arising during RSHE lessons. Staff will be supported to distinguish between questions that are appropriate for discussion within a classroom setting and those that may require an alternative response or follow-up.

Ground rules will be established and regularly revisited to help pupils participate respectfully and confidently in discussions. Staff will encourage questions and recognise that pupils may seek clarification on sensitive topics as part of their learning.

Where appropriate, staff may answer questions immediately. However, staff may decide that a question requires further consideration before providing a response. In such circumstances, the staff member may seek advice from the PSHCEE Lead, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), a member of the senior leadership team, or, where appropriate, discuss the matter with parents or carers.

Responses may be provided to an individual pupil, a small group or the whole class, depending on the nature of the question and whether the information would benefit other pupils.

Staff will answer questions honestly, factually and in an age-appropriate manner. Where information is not suitable for discussion within a lesson, staff will explain why and, where appropriate, signpost pupils to suitable sources of support or further information.

Should a question or discussion raise a safeguarding concern, staff will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and report the matter to the DSL without delay.

7.0 ASSESSMENT AND IMPACT

The Willows School has high expectations for pupils' progress and achievement within RSHE, as it does across all areas of the curriculum.

Assessment is used to identify pupils' knowledge, understanding, skills and progress over time. Assessment information supports teachers in identifying where additional support, intervention or challenge may be required to ensure all pupils achieve their full potential.

Although RSHE is not formally examined, teachers will assess pupils' learning through a range of appropriate methods, including:

- Questioning and class discussion.
- Quizzes and knowledge checks.
- Written work and assignments.
- Self-assessment and reflection activities.
- Peer assessment where appropriate.
- Mind maps and learning journals.
- Presentations, role-play and practical activities.
- Pupil voice activities and interviews.
- Portfolio-based evidence.

Assessment approaches will be adapted to meet the individual needs, abilities and communication styles of pupils.

The school will monitor the impact of RSHE through assessment information, pupil outcomes, pupil voice, behavioural indicators, safeguarding information, attendance, engagement and preparation for adulthood outcomes.

The curriculum is designed to equip pupils with knowledge, skills and behaviours that will support them throughout their lives. The impact of RSHE is therefore recognised not only through progress within school but also through pupils' readiness for adulthood, their ability to make informed decisions, manage relationships, keep themselves safe and participate positively in society.

Where possible, the school will seek information regarding former pupils' destinations and longer-term outcomes, including participation in education, employment and training, to inform ongoing curriculum development and evaluation.

8.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

8.1 Monitoring

The Headteacher will ensure appropriate support, challenge and oversight are in place to monitor the quality and effectiveness of RSHE provision across the school.

The PSHCEE Lead will undertake regular monitoring activities as part of the school's quality assurance and self-evaluation processes. Monitoring may include:

- Lesson observations and learning walks.
- Curriculum and planning reviews.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Assessment and progress information.

- Pupil voice activities.
- Parent and carer feedback.
- Staff feedback and professional discussions.
- Evaluation of external visitors and contributors.
- Review of safeguarding themes and emerging needs.

Monitoring information will be used to identify strengths, areas for development and priorities for improvement.

8.2 Review

The Headteacher, PSHCEE Lead, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and those responsible for governance will regularly review:

- The effectiveness of curriculum planning and delivery.
- Pupil progress, achievement and outcomes.
- The extent to which the curriculum meets the needs of pupils.
- Compliance with statutory guidance and safeguarding requirements.
- The knowledge, confidence and training needs of staff delivering RSHE.
- The quality and consistency of teaching across the school.
- The suitability, accessibility and effectiveness of curriculum resources and teaching materials.
- The contribution of RSHE to safeguarding, wellbeing and preparation for adulthood.
- Feedback from pupils, parents, carers, staff and external professionals.

The school will review this policy at least annually, or sooner where changes in legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding requirements or local circumstances make this necessary. The review process will ensure that the policy remains compliant, relevant and reflective of current best practice.

8.3 National Developments and Curriculum Review

The Willows School is committed to ensuring that its Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum reflects current statutory guidance, safeguarding expectations and recognised best practice.

The school will keep under review all relevant Department for Education guidance, including *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* and other safeguarding publications. Curriculum content, teaching approaches and resources will be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure continued compliance with statutory requirements and to meet the needs of pupils.

The school will also consider emerging local and national priorities, developments in safeguarding practice, online safety risks, technological advances and the changing needs of children and young people when reviewing its RSHE provision.

Pupil voice forms an important part of curriculum evaluation and development. Opportunities will be provided for pupils to share their views through activities such as questionnaires, pupil focus groups, the School Council and curriculum reviews.

The school will also seek feedback from parents and carers through consultation activities, questionnaires and policy reviews. This engagement supports the school's commitment to delivering a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of the school community whilst meeting its legal and safeguarding responsibilities.

9.0 GUIDANCE AND REFERENCES

The following legislation, statutory guidance and supporting documents have informed this policy:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, Department for Education.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education (2026), Department for Education.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and subsequent updates.
- NSPCC *Talk Relationships: A Whole School Approach Framework* (2024).
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and subsequent amendments.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools, Department for Education.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years, Department for Education and Department of Health.
- Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges, Ofsted.
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges, Department for Education.
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Department for Education.
- National Curriculum in England: Framework for Key Stages 1 to 4, Department for Education.
- 16 to 19 Study Programmes Guidance, Department for Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency.
- Relevant safeguarding, equality, curriculum, behaviour, online safety and data protection policies adopted by The Willows School.

10.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary of Key Content and How We Deliver the RSHE Curriculum

Appendix 2: Compulsory Aspects of RSHE

Appendix 1: Summary of Key Content and How We Deliver the RSHE Curriculum

The RSHE curriculum at The Willows School is planned and delivered in a way that ensures key knowledge, understanding and skills are taught at an appropriate stage for individual pupils. Content is sequenced progressively and adapted to meet pupils' ages, developmental stages, learning needs and abilities.

The key content outlined below reflects the expectations set out within the Department for Education's statutory guidance, *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education* and has been adapted to meet the needs of pupils at The Willows School. Teaching is delivered in an age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, inclusive and sensitive manner that promotes pupils' wellbeing, safety and preparation for adulthood.

The curriculum should also be read alongside related content taught through the National Curriculum for Science, Health Education and the wider PSHE curriculum. Through these combined areas of learning, pupils develop the knowledge and skills required to build healthy relationships, stay safe, understand consent and boundaries, maintain positive physical and mental health, and prepare successfully for adult life

Appendix 2: Compulsory Aspects of RSHE

This table summarises the compulsory aspects of RSHE, as set out by the DfE.

Curriculum Area	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4
Relationships Education	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.
Health Education (delivered through PSHE/RSHE)	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.
Science: Human and Reproduction Related Content	Must be taught where required by the National Curriculum. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught where required by the National Curriculum. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.
Sex Education (beyond statutory Relationships Education, Health Education and Science)	May be taught at the school's discretion. Parents/carers may request withdrawal.	May be taught at the school's discretion. Parents/carers may request withdrawal.	May be taught. Parents/carers may request withdrawal from non-statutory Education.	May be taught. Parents/carers may request withdrawal until three terms before the pupil's 16th birthday, after which the pupil can opt to receive the education.