

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy



Our vision is 'to empower our learners to achieve their best outcomes through high quality education, in preparation for life. Here we celebrate being unique individuals and develop unearthed potential'.

To be read in conjunction with:

- EQUALS Semi-formal curriculum (My Relationships and Sex Education) document
- DfE [Personal, social, health and economic \(PSHE\) education - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-social-health-and-economic-education-pshe/personal-social-health-and-economic-pshe-education) (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-social-health-and-economic-education-pshe/personal-social-health-and-economic-pshe-education)
- DfE [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-RSE-and-health-education) (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-RSE-and-health-education)
- PSHE Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- SMSC Policy
- Assessment and Feedback Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Intent of the Provision Policy

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1. Aims

At Copper Fields School, our Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum is designed to provide a comprehensive, inclusive, and supportive framework that enables our students to navigate the complexities of relationships, sexual health, and emotional well-being. The aim of RSE is to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed decisions about their relationships and to understand their rights and responsibilities in a safe and respectful manner.

The aims of RSE at Copper Fields School are:

- To foster emotional, social, and physical development through teaching about relationships, sexual health, human sexuality, and emotional well-being.
- To build self-worth and confidence, empowering students to communicate effectively, set boundaries, and develop empathy for others.
- To provide an understanding of puberty and sexual development, giving students the information they need to understand their changing bodies and how to care for them.
- To create a positive, respectful culture around relationships and individual identity, encouraging inclusion and kindness without promoting any one ideological viewpoint.
- To create a positive, respectful culture around relationships, gender identity, and sexuality, encouraging inclusivity and respect for diversity.

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- To help students recognise and make safe choices, equipping them to safeguard themselves against risks such as unhealthy relationships, sexual harassment, and online safety.
- To provide accurate information and promote the correct vocabulary, helping students to describe themselves, their bodies, and their experiences in a confident and respectful way.
- To teach pupils the skills needed to form positive, healthy relationships, including recognising the signs of unhealthy or abusive relationships and how to seek help when needed.

Our approach is personalised to meet the individual needs and learning styles of all our students, ensuring they feel safe, respected, and fully supported.

2. Statutory requirements

At Copper Fields School, we provide Relationships Education for all students as required by Section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. While sex education is not mandatory for primary-aged pupils, secondary-aged students are entitled to receive Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) as part of the statutory curriculum.

We follow the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), updated in 2025 and coming into effect in 2026, including:

- Relationships Education
- Health Education
- Sex Education (non-statutory at primary, statutory at secondary unless opted out)

In line with the 2025 guidance:

- **Biological sex will be taught as a scientific and legal fact.**
- **Any references to identity or experience are taught in a neutral, age-appropriate, and evidence-based manner.**

For students with Special Educational Needs (SEND), we adapt the RSE curriculum to ensure that it is delivered in a way that is developmentally appropriate. This includes:

- Personalised content matched to cognitive and emotional development
- Flexible delivery using visual, sensory, or one-to-one approaches in a manner that meets each student's developmental stage.
- Careful assessment of readiness before introducing complex topics such as reproduction or contraception and consent will be based on careful assessment of students' developmental readiness

While all secondary-aged students are entitled to receive RSE, the delivery of content will always reflect individual cognitive capacity and personal readiness, ensuring that students engage with the material in a way that is appropriate, respectful, and supportive of their development.

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3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy
4. Pupil consultation – be clear what exactly pupils want or need from their RSE including experience from other provision and student voice
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified

4. Definition

RSE is a planned and progressive part of our curriculum that focuses on emotional, social, and physical development. It supports students in forming respectful relationships, understanding body changes, and making safe, informed choices. It helps learners understand their rights, their bodily autonomy, and their responsibilities to others — always through a safeguarding-first lens. RSE is not about promoting sexual activity. It is about equipping all students, including those with SEND, with tools to navigate life safely and respectfully.

5. Curriculum

RSE is delivered through a blended developmental model using the *Equals RSE Curriculum*, *PSHE Association Framework*, *SoSafe*, and our *Branch-based progression system (Branches 1–15)*. Students are supported using "Explore", "Discover", and "Adventure" pathways depending on their cognitive and emotional development. Our approach is designed in collaboration with curriculum leads, parent/carers, and school staff, ensuring that content is relevant, accessible, and meaningful for each student, based on their individual learning goals and developmental stages.

New content added for 2026 includes:

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- **Managing grief and loss**
- **Emotional literacy and suicide prevention**
- **Online risks including incels, deepfakes, and sextortion**
- **Legal distinctions around sex and gender**

Frameworks and Programs

We use the following frameworks and programs to support our RSE planning and assessment:

- **Equals RSE Curriculum** – A specialized curriculum designed for students with SEND, focusing on Relationships, Health, and Sex Education.
- **PSHE Planning Framework for Pupils with SEND (2020)** – Aligning with **DfE 2020 Guidance** on RSE and SEND.
- **SoSafe Programme** – A visual and structured programme that helps students understand concepts related to safety, relationships, and sexual health.
- **NSPCC Speak Out, Stay Safe** – Used to reinforce messages about personal safety, emotional well-being, and respectful relationships.

These frameworks guide our planning and ensure that RSE is delivered consistently across the school, providing the structure and vocabulary needed for effective delivery while meeting the needs of our students.

At Copper Fields School, we provide a structured RSE curriculum that supports all students in building the skills necessary to form healthy relationships and understand their emotional and physical development. By delivering RSE across a variety of contexts and with individualised strategies, we aim to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make safe, informed decisions as they prepare for adulthood.

Curriculum Structure

At Copper Fields School, our RSHE curriculum is taught through a **developmental model**, stage not by chronological age. This ensures that all learners, regardless of cognitive profile or diagnosis, can access meaningful learning at a level that is safe, appropriate, and relevant to their personal development.

Developmental Framework: The Branch Model

Our curriculum follows a **Branch-based progression system**, consisting of **15 branches** mapped across three key learning areas:

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Developmental Stage	Branches	Health & Wellbeing	Relationships	Wider World
Pre-Concepts	1–3	Care routines, basic body awareness, emotional response	Attachment, comfort, parallel play	Awareness of people & group routines
Early Concepts	4–6	Hygiene, naming body parts, privacy, simple feelings	Turn-taking, basic friendships	Families, community roles
Core Concepts	7–10	Safety, independence, body autonomy, basic regulation	Consent, kindness, recognising unkind behaviour	Diversity, equality, respect
Deepening Concepts	11–13	Puberty, online safety, mental health, safe/unsafe behaviours	Changing friendships, assertiveness, managing disagreement	Challenging stereotypes, active citizenship
Applied Concepts	14–15	Contraception, STIs, consent, coercion, sexual readiness	Healthy vs unhealthy relationships, pressure, rights	Advocacy, law, discrimination

Each student accesses content based on their **current Branch level**, as assessed through teacher observation and progression evidence. This ensures that all learners are:

- Taught at the right level of readiness, although we recognise that physical development and safeguarding may require introducing content from higher branches.
- Supported to revisit, rehearse, and consolidate key concepts over time
- Given visual, sensory, structured, or abstract learning based on their needs
-

This approach ensures that learners are:

- Not left uninformed at key moments of physical development
- Supported to understand changes that affect bodily autonomy and safety
- Given appropriate language and concepts to seek help and express boundaries

All decisions to deliver content from a higher branch are made:

- Based on professional judgement
- In consultation with families and safeguarding staff
- Using evidence from EHCPs, classroom observation, and physical development milestones

Curriculum Content by Strand

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Health & Wellbeing

Covers:

- Body awareness and privacy
- Hygiene, sleep, food
- Emotional literacy and regulation
- Puberty, reproduction, contraception
- Mental health, grief and loss
- Online and offline safety

Relationships

Covers:

- Trust, comfort, friendships
- Consent and boundaries
- Online and face-to-face communication
- Respecting difference and diversity
- Managing conflict and change
- Recognising unhealthy or coercive relationships

Wider World & Safety

Covers:

- Belonging, identity, British values
- Community rules and fairness
- Online risks (deepfakes, sextortion, influencers)
- Media awareness and misinformation
- Equality, discrimination, and advocacy

Rather than being isolated to a single subject, RSHE is embedded through multiple pathways including:

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- **Life Skills** (hygiene, independence, boundaries)
- **Zones of Regulation** (emotions, consent, safety)
- **Science** (body parts, reproduction, biological sex)
- **ICT** (online safety, influencers, media)
- **Wellbeing & Tutor Sessions** (respect, relationships, identity, safety)

This approach ensures:

- Overlearning and repetition
- Contextualised practice across settings
- Opportunities for staff to model respectful, safe relationships daily

Key concepts such as consent, boundaries, private/public, and body awareness are taught from the earliest pre-conceptual branches using visuals, routines, and sensory stories, and built upon gradually toward formal sexual health content.

The curriculum includes clear, factual teaching of biological sex, reproduction, puberty, and online safety, while teaching around personal identity or beliefs is handled with sensitivity, neutrality, and without ideological bias.

RSE activities are planned as part of a sequential learning pathway, ensuring that themes are revisited regularly and taught in various contexts. This progression ensures that content is embedded through repetition and overlearning, reinforcing key concepts and allowing students to generalize learning across different contexts.

6. Delivery Methods

At Copper Fields, RSE is delivered explicitly through lessons and implicitly through daily life. Strategies include. In the lower years, while there is a strong emphasis on implicit learning integrated into daily routines, group activities, and informal opportunities, explicit lessons are also introduced. These lessons focus on key RSE concepts, such as personal care, emotional health, and basic relationships, in a clear and structured way. This dual approach ensures that students receive both a formal introduction to core concepts and informal, day-to-day learning experiences.

As students' progress through middle and upper school, RSE teaching continues to be explicit, with a focus on more complex concepts related to independent living, preparation for adulthood, and advanced relationship skills. Even in upper school, however, key concepts are reinforced implicitly through day-to-day interactions and real-life learning opportunities.

Both the PSHE Association and the Equals Curriculum inform our RSE delivery, ensuring that content is relevant, accessible, and meets the needs of all

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learners. The PSHE Association program supports all pathways and provides the broader framework for personal, social, health, and economic education, while the Equals Curriculum provides specific sections that focus on the developmental stages and needs of learners on the Discoverers and Adventurers pathways.

If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond appropriately, ensuring that the information provided is accurate and age appropriate. This approach ensures that students are well-informed and guided to avoid seeking answers from inappropriate or unreliable sources.

Primary sex education will focus on:

- Preparing all learners, regardless of gender, for the changes that adolescence brings
- Understanding how a baby is conceived and born RSE is delivered through the following methods:
 - Group Lessons: Teachers use role play, discussions, videos, and other engaging methods tailored to the individual needs of the students.
 - Individual Lessons: RSE may be delivered on an individual basis, particularly for students who require more personalized support.
 - Daily Routines: RSE is integrated into everyday activities such as personal care routines, snack time, and transitions, which provide organic learning opportunities in the context of students' daily experiences.
 - Assemblies/Gatherings: Whole-school sessions on themes like online safety, emotional well-being, and healthy relationships.
 - Circle Time: Group activities that encourage students to express feelings, learn social skills, and explore relationship concepts.
 - Themed Days and Activities: Special events focusing on specific areas of RSE, such as healthy relationships, puberty, and sexual health.
 - Community-Based Activities: Engaging with the local community to apply RSE in real-world contexts, building skills for independent living.
 - Informal Opportunities: Teachers and support staff use spontaneous moments throughout the school day to reinforce RSE concepts, such as conflict resolution or discussing feelings.

RSE is taught in a structured manner. The curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of students, ensuring that topics are introduced and revisited in a way that supports their cognitive and emotional development.

Support for Learners

All sexual health education is delivered by trained classroom teachers as part of the curriculum, ensuring that students receive clear and age-appropriate information in a safe and supportive environment. Teachers are responsible for delivering the full scope of RSE, including sexual health, puberty, reproductive health, and sexual variations, as part of the broader curriculum.

Pastoral Support Plan (PSP)

To ensure that all learners receive the right support, Copper Fields School has developed a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) for every student. The PSP is a key tool in safeguarding and ensures that RSE is delivered with the right support at the right time for each learner. It provides a clear framework for supporting learners with additional needs and is integrated into the school's safeguarding procedures.

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The PSP is reviewed regularly and involves a collaborative approach, with input from class teachers, safeguarding leads, parents/carers, and other professionals. The PSP helps to ensure that learners receive personalized interventions and support for RSE, safeguarding, and overall well-being

RSE is taught following the RSE Equals Curriculum for learners on our Semi-formal pathway and through PSHE scheme for those on the formal pathway in conjunction with the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum, following the PSHE Association programme. Biological aspects of RSE will also be taught within the science curriculum. The school ensures the curriculum meets the statutory requirements set out in the [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance](#).

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board has delegated the approval of this policy to Chris Clements (Headteacher)

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from components of RSE (see section 8).

7.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- › Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- › Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- › Monitoring progress (including assessment through Evidence for Learning (EfL)).
- › Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- › Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the components of RSE

Staff are expected to:

- Teach only content that is age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, and evidence-based
- Follow the statutory guidance that **prohibits teaching gender identity as fact**

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- Support all learners to feel respected and safe

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher. Quality assurance processes and procedures in the school will oversee the quality of provision and development implemented where required.

Sarah Chalmers-Thorpe (Assistant Headteacher and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) will oversee the day-to-day planning and delivery of the RSE curriculum under the direction of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Other teaching staff will be supported to deliver the RSE curriculum as per the school plans and schedule, including teachers, tutors and learning support assistants.

7.4 Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

8. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents may:

- Not withdraw from Relationships or Health Education
- **Withdraw their child from Sex Education up to three terms before the child turns 16**
- View all RSHE resources used in lessons, either via request or at parent events

Parents have the right to request to withdraw their children from the sex education components within RSE for primary aged children except where elements are taught within the science curriculum. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher.

Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

8.1 Parents Right to View Resources

In line with 2026 guidance, all teaching materials for RSE must be made available to parents on request. Parents are encouraged to engage with staff before requesting withdrawal to ensure shared understanding.

Parents will be invited to view resources via presentations or through email request to the Headteacher. If parents are unable to view them via these platforms, they have the option to request these in printed form, although would be encouraged to view via the platforms to ensure that they are viewed in context. This enables parents to best support learners at home with their learning.

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9. Training

All staff receive:

- Annual CPD on RSE content and safeguarding
- Guidance on using neutral, non-ideological language
- Support with teaching challenging content (e.g. consent, online harms, gender discussions)

Staff also receive comprehensive training on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction process and it is also integrated into our ongoing continuing professional development (CPD) calendar. This ensures that staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to deliver RSE effectively and confidently. The Headteacher will also invite external specialists such as school nurses, sexual health professionals, and other relevant experts to provide support and additional training for staff teaching RSE. This collaboration ensures that staff stay informed about the latest developments in sexual health education and can deliver the curriculum in line with best practices and statutory guidelines.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery and effectiveness of RSE is regularly monitored to ensure it is being implemented in line with our policy and meeting the needs of all learners. The Headteacher (Chris Clements) is responsible for overseeing the monitoring process, which includes:

- Learning Walks: The Headteacher will conduct regular learning walks to observe the delivery of RSE lessons and ensure they are in line with the curriculum.
- Work Quality Assurance: The quality of work produced by students will be reviewed to assess their understanding of key concepts taught through RSE.
- Pupil Progress Checks: Ongoing tracking of students' progress in RSE will be carried out by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems. This allows for timely identification of any additional support or adjustments that may be required for individual students.
- Feedback from families and staff will be regularly gathered to ensure content remains inclusive, legally compliant, and developmentally matched.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Headteacher at regular intervals and will also undergo review by the Governing Body to ensure it remains relevant and in line with statutory requirements.

Appendix 1: Curriculum Framework

RSHE Developmental framework

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Developmental Stage	Branches	Health & Wellbeing	Relationships	Wider World & Safety
Pre-Concepts	1–3	Responding to care, noticing discomfort, body part awareness	Seeking comfort, shared attention, parallel play	Awareness of people, familiar places, group routines
Early Concepts	4–6	Hygiene routines, naming private parts, recognising basic feelings	Turn-taking, kindness, simple friendships	Understanding family, following rules, recognising difference
Core Concepts	7–10	Body autonomy, safety, emotional regulation, basic health	Consent, recognising unkind behaviour, friendships	Inclusion, equality, community roles
Deepening Concepts	11–13	Puberty, mental health, online safety, strong feelings	Managing conflict, changing friendships, boundaries	Stereotypes, rights, social responsibility
Applied Concepts	14–15	Sexual health, contraception, consent, coercion	Healthy vs unhealthy relationships, pressure, peer dynamics	Law, discrimination, advocacy, challenging injustice

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Appendix 2: Core RSHE Concepts and Teaching Notes

We follow DfE statutory content for Relationships and Health Education. Delivery is based on **readiness and need**, not chronological age. Below is a summary of how core concepts are introduced and how staff determine suitability:

Theme	Key Concepts	Typical Starting Branch	Safeguarding/Readiness Notes
Consent & Body Autonomy	My body belongs to me; private vs public; saying no	Branch 4–5	Always taught early, revisited regularly
Naming Body Parts	Penis, vulva, breasts, etc.	Branch 4+	Essential for safeguarding – taught with visuals
Puberty	Periods, erections, emotional changes	Branch 11+ (may be earlier)	Introduced when physically appropriate, even if Branch 4 cognitively
Reproduction	Sperm, egg, conception, birth	Branch 12+	Taught factually, through Science and Life Skills
Healthy Relationships	Respect, trust, kindness, boundaries	Branch 5+	Embedded in daily routines and group work
Online Safety	Stranger danger, grooming, deepfakes	Branch 7+	Repeated yearly with updated examples
Diversity & Equality	Families, cultures, protected characteristics	Branch 6+	Taught through Humanities, PSHE, assemblies
Sexual Health & Contraception	Condoms, STIs, pregnancy choices	Branch 14+	Only for pupils developmentally ready and physically relevant

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Appendix 3: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			

Any other information you would like the school to consider	
Parent signature	

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL

Agreed actions from discussion with parents	Include notes from discussions with parents and agreed actions taken. Eg: Joe Bloggs will be taking part in all relationships lessons and during the sex education lessons, he will be working independently on a project in the Year 5 classroom

Appendix 3: Access Model – Explore, Discover, Adventure

DfE 2025 Statutory Content	Copper Strand	Explorer	Discover	Adventurer
RELATIONSHIPS				
Recognising & expressing feelings	My Wellbeing – RSHE	Sensory story, Zones visuals, objects of reference	Circle time, symbol-supported discussions	Group reflection journals, drama workshops
Friendships & respectful relationships	My Wellbeing – RSHE; Copper Culture	Turn-taking games, intensive interaction	Social stories, role play	Team projects, peer mentoring
Consent & boundaries	My Wellbeing – RSHE; Life Skills	"Stop" cards, body map visuals	Scripted role play, supported choices	Campaign projects, scenario workshops
Families & different types	My Wellbeing – RSHE	Family dolls, photo props	Stories, visuals	Media projects, debate, presentations
Gender identity & biological sex (new)	My Wellbeing – RSHE	Body awareness visuals	Puberty story sessions	Explicit but factual lessons; clarity on terms
Misogyny & respect for women/girls (new)	My Wellbeing – RSHE	Positive role models, stories	Discussions on language & respect	Campaign projects, debates, PSHE workshops
HEALTH & WELLBEING				
Physical health (hygiene, sleep, exercise)	My Life Skills – Independence; PE	Visual routines, task sequences	Guided practice, social narratives	Fitness projects, wellbeing planners
Healthy eating	My Life Skills – Food Tech	Sensory food play	Cooking sessions with pictorial recipes	Meal project: plan → budget → cook → review
Mental wellbeing (coping, resilience, regulation)	My Wellbeing – RSHE; Sensory	Regulation station, sensory circuits	Zones of Regulation	Peer mentoring, self-help guide projects
Puberty & body changes	My Wellbeing – RSHE	Visual puberty boards, social stories	Small-group sessions with visuals	Project-based workshops, Q&A
Pregnancy & reproduction	My Wellbeing – RSHE; Life Skills	Object cues, story props	Simplified visual sequences	Explicit, factual projects and discussions
Change, loss, grief (new)	My Wellbeing – RSHE	Sensory memory boxes, stories	Group reflections, loss social stories	Journaling projects, remembrance activities
BEING SAFE				
Community safety (roads, rail, water, fire) (new)	My Life Skills – Independence	Crossing-road role play, visuals	Supervised community visits	Travel training projects, safety audits
Online safety (AI, deepfakes, influencers) (new)	My World – ICT; RSHE	Simple visual rules ("ask an adult")	Symbol-supported activities	Peer-made safety guides, ICT projects
Safeguarding – trusted adults	My Wellbeing – RSHE; Copper Culture	Safe-hand visuals	"Who's who" booklet, role play	Case studies, safeguarding scenarios
WIDER WORLD & CAREERS				
Respect for diversity & equality	My World – Humanities; RSHE	Multisensory cultural stories	Themed days, group activities	Debates, campaigns, presentations
Preparing for adulthood & work	My Futures (Branch 16); Life Skills	Pretend play jobs: onsite strands (Copper Catering, Copper	Enterprise projects: structured vocational strands (onsite/online)	Work experience; extended vocational strands; Functional Skills