TENAX SCHOOLS TRUST

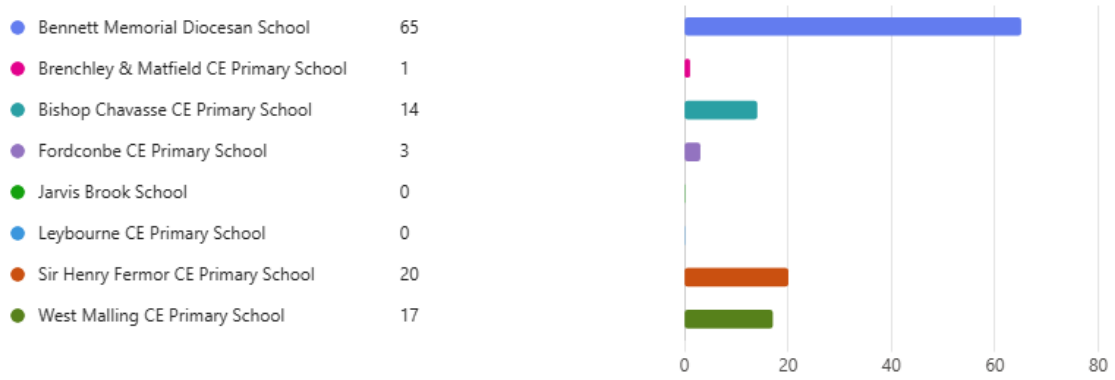
Excellence together; transformative education for every child.

Response to consultation on Relationships and Sex Education Policy- July 2026

We wish to thank all stakeholders who engaged with us through the consultation process.

We received a total of 120 responses in relation to the trust wide consultation. By school, the breakdown of responses is as follows:

2. Please select the school(s) your child(ren) currently attend, or the school(s) you are linked to.



We received four responses via other means of contact; two emails from parents at Bennett Memorial, an email from a Fordcombe parent, and an email from a parent with pupils at West Malling and Bennett Memorial.

Emerging themes from respondents were:

- Respondents wanted additional support to discuss relationships and sex with their children, including glossaries of terms and accessible formats. This will be provided.
- Respondents felt that the policy should explicitly set out the Christian theological foundations of the Trust, and the trust boards responsibility for oversight, in light of its Christian foundation. While the theological statement is not included, the policy has been amended to clarify where those statements are to be found.
- Respondents wanted clear communication from schools on when topics would be covered, so that parents/carers could be prepared to follow up at home. This will be provided in the form of curriculum overviews on school websites and lesson level information on request.
- Respondents were clear that they were concerned about consent. Consent and appropriate touch feature in both primary and secondary curricula.
- Respondents had varying views on gender, protected characteristics and the public debate surrounding gender and biological sex. The Trust will be careful not to endorse any particular view. The Trust will ensure that all pupils are taught about protected characteristics under the equality act in an age-appropriate way.
- Respondents felt that Year 9 content should be moved to Year 8, including generic requests and specifically one around vaping. Vaping is covered in Year 8. We have considered moving other parts of content, but on balance feel the current curriculum sequence is appropriate.

- A respondent wanted to know how assessment would be undertaken to ensure that pupils have learnt. No formal assessments e.g. testing will be used to assess the curriculum in this area. However teachers will use classroom strategies to explore pupils understanding of the subject matter, this may include for example use of quizzes, mini-whiteboards, and questioning.
- A respondent wanted to know how their child would be able to access lessons due to their SEND needs. Schools will be expected to adapt curriculum content to meet individual pupils needs.
- A respondent wished for us to explicitly state that the Trust would not work with external providers who hold extreme religious views. The policy covers visiting speakers, and the Trust safeguards around this are outlined in the policy.
- A respondent felt that there was not enough focus on Internet risk and AI. These areas are covered in the curriculum content.
- Respondents commented on the wording around boys and girls (p5), and related comments on the balance of misogyny and misandry. Wording has been changed or deleted to reflect clarity that all pupils will be included in lessons and content will be balanced. Detailed plans for individual lessons will be available on request.
- A respondent wanted greater emphasis on critical thinking, and not just information sharing in lessons. We believe effective teaching fosters critical thinking, and that our Trust model for effective teaching promotes this.
- A respondent felt that financial exploitation should be specifically taught, and that knife crime (personal safety) and criminal exploitation should be included. These areas are covered in the curriculum content.
- A respondent felt we should acknowledge that views are different and deeply held and that teaching should be non-judgemental, inclusive and respectful. The policy has been amended to make this explicit, as our approach has always been implicitly thus. This concern is also covered by section 6 of the Staff Code of Conduct. Employment Policies - Tenax Schools Trust

Next steps the Trust will take in response to consultation:

- The Trust has amended its policy to reflect areas of the consultation agreed by the Board of Trustees as needing revision. For ease and transparency, these areas are highlighted in the attached policy.
- The Trust will develop some resources which schools will share with their stakeholders to support parents talking to their children about relationships and sex. This will include a parent glossary of key terms.
- Schools will inform parents when topics are being covered, by sharing curriculum maps on websites, and sharing lesson level resources on request. Schools will be required to make it clear which parts of the curriculum could be subject to parents' request to withdraw.
- The Trust policy sets out our approach to ensuring that external visitors who may work with students are sharing information in line with the curriculum and values of the Trust.

- The Trust recognises that there are varying views of gender identity. The Trust will be careful not to endorse any particular view. The Trust will ensure that all pupils are taught about protected characteristics under the Equality Act, in an age-appropriate way. The Trust will follow the guidance in Keeping children safe in education 2026 (comes into force from 1 September 2026) in regard to supporting pupils who may question their gender.

Further information for stakeholders:

We do not propose to provide individual, bespoke responses to those who contributed to the consultation, due to the extreme workload of such a commitment. Having reviewed this consultation response and revised policy, we would encourage any stakeholders who remain concerned about the content of lessons to request information from individual schools when lesson plans and resources are available.

Board of Tenax Schools Trust