ST. PHILIP HOWARD
CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

2026-2027

Mission Statement

"Team SPH: heads, hearts, hands together on the success journey"

Together, we will make the SPH journey: safely, respectfully and with kindness as part of a **united Catholic family.**

God will be at the heart of our journey, supporting us to realise the potential of our **God given talents.**

Our Gospel Values will guide us on our journey, helping us to make **brave choices** along the way.

Respect for all will be at the spirit of our journey and we will **embrace the uniqueness** of everyone we greet.

Inspiration and passion for learning will lead us all to have a **memorable and successful** journey.

Ratified by Governors	September 2024
Chair of Governors	C parker
Headteacher	M Kays
Due for Review	July 2027

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

In this policy the governors, senior leadership team and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents and carers, set out their intentions about relationships and sex education (RSE). We set out our rationale for and approach to relationships and sex education in the school.

Consultation has taken place with the senior leadership team and the school governors. This policy follows the Relationships and Sex Education guidelines from the Catholic Education Service.

Implementation and Review of Policy

Implementation of the policy will take place after consultation with the Governors in the Spring term of 2021. This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Head teacher, Senior Leadership Team, Middle Leaders, the Governing Body and staff. The next review date is July 2025.

Dissemination

The draft policy will be given to all members of the Governing Body, and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. The policy will be available to all parents through the school's web site. A copy of the document will be available in the school office. The RSE curriculum will also be published on the school's web site.

Defining Relationship and Sex Education

DfE guidance says "the aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship".[1]. It is about the development of the pupil's knowledge and understanding of her or him as a sexual being, about what it means to be fully human, called to live in right relationships with self and others and being enabled to make moral decisions in conscience.

Statutory Curriculum Requirements

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum in Science. However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

RATIONALE

'I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL' (JN.10.10)

We are involved in relationships and sex education precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. The belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in a catholic school. Our approach to RSE therefore is rooted

[1] Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers' DfE 2019

in the catholic church's teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals.

At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit in Communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation. Because of the Christian belief that we are made in the image and likeness of God, gender and sexuality are seen as God's gift, reflect God's beauty, and share in thedivine creativity. RSE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationships as it is there that sexuality grows and develops.

Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales and as advocated by the DFE, RSE will be firmly embedded in a cross-curricular approach including English, Computer Science, Food Preparation, Performing Arts, Physical Education, RE, Science and SPHE, as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils. It is centered on Christ's vision of being human as good news and will be positive and prudent, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.

All RSE will be in accordance with the church's moral teaching. It will emphasise the central importance of marriage and the family whilst acknowledging that all pupils have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from, and support will be provided to help pupils deal with different sets of values.

VALUES AND VIRTUES

Our programme enshrines Catholic values relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life. It also promotes those virtues which are essential in responding to God's call to love others with a proper respect for their dignity and the dignity of the human body. The following virtues will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

AIM OF RSE AND THE MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission Statement commits to developing the education of the whole person and we believe that RSEis an integral part of this education. Furthermore, we commit ourselves to doing this through a belief that all are unique and equal in the eyes of God, through a culture of respect for oneself and for others, and by fostering a love and joy of learning and healthy living, to produce happy, healthy, successful and responsible global citizens.

It is in this context that we commit ourselves, in partnership with parents, to provide children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education"[2] which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

Objectives

To develop the following attitudes and virtues:

- Reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility.
- Respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others.
- Joy in the goodness of the created world and their own bodily natures.

[2] *Gravissimum Educationis 1*

- Responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others.
- Recognising and valuing their own sexual identity and that of others.
- Celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love.
- Recognising the importance of marriage and family life.
- Fidelity in relationships.

To develop the following personal and social skills:

- Making sound judgements and good choices which have integrity, and which are respectful of the individual's commitments.
- Loving and being loved, and the ability to form friendships and loving, stable relationships free from exploitation, abuse and bullying.
- Managing emotions with confidence, sensitivity and dignity within relationships and when relationships break down.
- Managing conflict positively, recognising the value of difference.
- Cultivating humility, mercy and compassion, learning to forgive and be forgiven.
- Developing self-esteem and confidence, demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others.
- Building resilience and the ability to resist unwanted pressures, recognising the influence and impact of the media, internet and peer groups and so developing the ability to assess pressures and respond appropriately.
- Being patient, delaying gratification and learning to recognise the appropriate stages in the development of relationships, and how to love chastely.
- Assessing risks and managing behaviours to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity.

To know and understand:

- The Church's teaching on relationships and the nature and meaning of sexual love.
- The Church's teaching on marriage and the importance of marriage and family life.
- The centrality and importance of virtue in guiding humans, living and loving.
- The physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty.
- The facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation.
- How to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception.
- How to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

OUTCOMES

INCLUSION AND DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, faith or culture and is taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination. Lessons will also help children to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber-

bullying), use of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help. Delivery of RSE will be fully aligned with our school's inclusion policy.

EQUALITIES OBLIGATIONS

The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, pregnancy, maternity, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children or disadvantaged.

BROAD CONTENT OF RSE

Three aspects of RSE - attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills will be provided in three inter-related ways: the whole school / ethos dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific relationships and sex curriculum.

Our programme adopts a cross-curricular approach, returning to the same themes and topics at an appropriate age level throughout Years 7 to 11. Elements of the structure of the programme is based on the modelCatholic RSE curriculum provided by the Catholic Education Service.

PROGRAMME / RESOURCES

Teaching strategies will include (but not limited to) establishing ground rules, discussion, project learning, reflection, active, brainstorming, film & video, group work, role-play and values clarification. Assessment strategies will include (but not be limited to) in class questioning, written tasks, presentations, quizzes and tests.

(See also 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers' DfE 2019.)

PARENTS AND CARERS

We recognise that parents and other carers who stand in their place are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children. Therefore, the school supports parents and carers by signposting material to be shared with their children at home; this is available on the school website. Parents and carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning.

Parents and carers were consulted before this policy was ratified by the governors. It was our aim that, at the end of the consultation process, every parent and carer have full confidence in the school's RSE programme to meet their child's needs.

Parents and carers have the right to withdraw their children from RSE except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum, Science orders. Should parents or carers wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the headteacher. The school will provide support by providing material for parents and carers to help the children with their learning.

We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.

BALANCED CURRICULUM

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE relating to forced-marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion, the age of consent and legislation relating to equality. Knowing about facts and enabling young people to explore differing viewpoints is not the same as promoting behaviour and is not incompatible with our school's promotion of Catholic teaching.

We will ensure that pupils have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHING THE PROGRAMME

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lays with the Associate Assistant Headteacher and Form Tutors and subject teaching staff in English, Computer Science, Food Preparation, Performing Arts, PE, RE, Science and PSHE.

However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE programme. They will be role models for pupils of good, healthy, wholesome relationships as between staff, other adults and pupils. They will also be contributing to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.

External Visitors

Our school will call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSE. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher-led sessions. It is important that any external visitor is clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in school delivering a session. Any visitor must adhere to our code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools'[3]. Health professionals should follow the school's policies, minimising the potential for disclosures or inappropriate comments using negotiated ground rules and distancing techniques as other teachers would. They will ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice.

OTHER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING RSE

Governors

- Draw up the RSE policy in consultation with parents and teachers.
- Ensure that the policy is available to parents.
- Ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g. SEN, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs.
- Ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children.
- Establish a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used.

[3] Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools, CES, Feb. 2011

- Ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum Science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHE.

Head teacher The Head teacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, the Diocesan Schools' Service and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

SPHE/RSE Co-Ordinator

The coordinator with the head teacher has a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to RSE and the provision of in-service training. Currently, this is the Associate Assistant Headteacher who is also Head of RE.

All Staff

RSE is a whole school issue. All teachers have a responsibility of care; as well as fostering academic progress they should actively contribute to the guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual well- being of their pupils. Teachers will be expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSE. All staff have been included in the development of this policy and all staff should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

This RSE policy is delivered through strong cross-curricular links drawing on staff specialisms with specific discussion content forming part of the PSHE framework. Examples of cross- curricular links can be found with aspects of the curriculum delivered through English, Food Preparation, Computer Science, RE, Science, PE and Performing Arts. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents.

Pupils with difficulties, whether of a physical or intellectual nature will receive appropriatelydifferentiated support to enable them to achieve mature knowledge, understanding and skills. Teaching methods will be adapted to meet the varying needs of this group of pupils.

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. They want to ensure that pupils can ask questions freely, be confident that their questions will be answered, and be sure that they will be free from bullying or harassment from other children and young people.

Controversial or Sensitive Issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE. These may be matters of maturity, of personal involvement or experience of children, of disagreement with the official teaching of the Church, of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious or harmful activity. The governors believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the

RSE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion.

(See also Sex and Relationship Guidance, 4.5 'Dealing with questions' 0116/2000, Department for Education and Employment, July 2000 for more detail)

Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, e.g. where a child or young person's questions hint at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE AT RISK

Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place. Effective RSE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue. Teachers will need to be aware of the needs of their pupils and not let any fears and worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects that a child or young person is a victim of or is at risk of abuse, they are required to follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible. In matters of safeguarding, GDPR regulations will be over-ridden.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ADVICE

All governors, all teachers, all support staff, all parents and all pupils must be made aware of this policy, particularly as it relates to issues of advice and confidentiality.

All lessons, especially those in the RSE programme, will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and sex, developing appropriate personal and social skills and becoming appreciative of the values and attitudes which underpin the Christian understanding of what it means to be fully human.

Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in the programme. Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties, in line with the school's pastoral care policy. Teachers should explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance. Teachers will explain that in such circumstances they would have to inform others, e.g. parents, head teacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Associate Assistant Headteacher and Head of RE will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils work at regular intervals. The programme will be evaluated biannually by means of questionnaires /response sheets/needs assessment given to pupils, and/or by discussion with pupils, staff and parents. The results of the evaluation should be reported to these groups of interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.