

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL



RSE POLICY

Approved by: LGC Date: February 2021

Last reviewed on: July 2025

Next review due by: July 2026

1. Context

“All the system converges to this, to give personal worth to each child, worth of character, strength of principles, anchorage in faith”

Janet Erskine Stuart

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, 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 on this policy has taken place in the following way:

- Pupil focus groups
- Parent focus groups
- Review of RSE curriculum content with staff and pupils
- Consultation with Local Governing Committee

Please also refer to:

- Safeguarding Policy
- SEN and Disability Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Online Safety

Implementation and Review of Policy

Implementation of the policy will take place after consultation with the Governors in the summer term 2021. This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Headteacher, RSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and Staff. The next review date is June 2025.

Dissemination

The draft policy will be given to all members of the Governing Body, and will be available for all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the document will be available to all parents through the school’s website and a copy is available in the school office.

Defining Relationship Sex Education

The DfE guidance states that “children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way”. It is about the development of the pupil’s knowledge and understanding of themselves 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. In secondary schools RSE should “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. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure).”¹

¹ CES A Model Policy for Relationships and Sex Education 2016 Revised 2020

Statutory Requirements

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

2. 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 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. As a consequence 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 the divine creativity. RSE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationship 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 the PSHE framework as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils. It is centred 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. It will also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

Values

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 the God's call to love others with a proper respect for their dignity and the dignity of the human body.

3. Aims

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, our school aims state that we will endeavour to raise pupils' self-esteem, help them to grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of all persons and develop caring and sensitive attitudes. It is in this context that we commit ourselves, in partnership with parents, to provide our pupils with a "positive and prudent sexual education"²

² Gravissimum Educationis

which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

This policy aims 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
- 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 within relationships, and when relationships break down, with confidence, sensitivity and dignity
- managing conflict positively, recognising the value of difference
- cultivating humility, 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
- assessing risks and managing behaviours in order 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 human 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.

4. 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 pupils 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. The SEND co-ordinator, Heads and Deputy Heads of Year in partnership with the PSHCE co-ordinator, will provide a bespoke programme for individual students where it is deemed appropriate

Equalities Obligation

The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all of the pupils.

Overview of Programme

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. (See Appendix 1)

6. Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents (and other carers who stand in their place) are the primary educators of their daughter. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their daughter.

Parents/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 daughter's learning.

Parents have been consulted before this policy was ratified by the governors. They will continue to be consulted during the development of the RSE programme, as well as during the process of monitoring, review and evaluation. They will be able to view the learning overview used by the school in the RSE programme on the school website. Our aim is that parents and carers will have full confidence in the school's RSE programme to meet their daughter's needs.

Parents continue to have ***the right to withdraw*** their daughter from Sex Education except in those elements which are required by the 'National Curriculum Science Programme of Study'. Should parents wish to withdraw their daughter they are asked to notify the school by contacting the Pastoral Deputy Headteacher. Parents/Carers will be required to make provision for the supervision of their child for the duration of the session.

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

7. The 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 including information 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 lies with a number of staff including teachers of Science, Religious Education, Physical Education, PSHCE co-ordinator and Personal Tutors.

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 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 often 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 and follows the school's policies.

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 and speakers material and sessions will be quality assured by the PSHCE co-ordinator.

8. Other Roles and Responsibilities

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 daughters
- establish a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used
- ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHE

Headteacher

The Headteacher 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.

PSHE/RSE Co-Ordinator

The co-ordinator 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. They will also be supported by the Pastoral Deputy Headteacher.

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 guardianship and 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. 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.

9. Your Daughter'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 others.

Controversial or Sensitive issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE. These may be matter of maturity, of personal involvement or experience of daughter, of disagreement with the official teaching of the Church, of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious or harmful activity. The governors believe that your daughter will be 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.

10. Supporting Children who are at risk

Pupils will 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.

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.

11. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The PSHCE co-ordinator 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.