

**ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**  
**POLICY FOR RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION**



**Mission Statement**

We are a Catholic community whose mission is to fully prepare our students for the wider world and to send them into it equipped for life and for the service of others. We come together from diverse backgrounds, united by Christ, by the highest aspirations and by a thirst for excellence to instil in our students a respect for themselves, for others and for their environment. We take our inspiration from Jesus' commandment to "love one another".

**Approved by the Local Academy Committee: 23 October 2024**

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**

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

- Review of RSE with Leadership January 2023
- Student voice academic year 2023-24
- Parents/Guardians informed of RSE content and the right to withdraw
- Parents/Guardians issued with a username and password in order to be able to access TEN: TEN Resources used Y7-11

## **Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Assistant Head for Personal Development and Wellbeing and will be agreed by the Local Academy Committee.

## **Dissemination**

The policy will be available to all members of the Local Academy Committee, and 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. Details of the content of the RSE curriculum will also be published on the school's web site.

## **DEFINING RELATIONSHIPS AND 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"<sup>1</sup>. 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 primary schools the focus should be on "teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults."<sup>2</sup> This would include the topics of families and the people who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe. 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)."<sup>1</sup>

## **STATUTORY CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS**

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of the National Curriculum for Science, including the additional requirements for maintained Secondary Schools. In addition to this the Department for Education (DfE) has published statutory guidance about how Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education should be implemented in all schools across England by 2020 (DfE, 2019a). Schools are encouraged to

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<sup>1</sup> Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 25

implement the new curriculum from September 2019. However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

## **RATIONALE**

As a Catholic school we believe that relationships and sex education is a fundamental educational entitlement for all students and an integral part of each person's emergence into adulthood. From September 2021 the delivery of RSE is part of a statutory framework. All Saints Catholic High School implement the Catholic Education Service (CES) policy for relationships and sex education.<sup>2</sup>

**'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 (and the Welsh Assembly Government) 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 from whatever household they come. It will also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

## **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 as detailed in the curriculum information.

## **AIM OF RSE AND THE MISSION STATEMENT**

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural and 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 children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education"<sup>4</sup> which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/uk/schools/relationship-sex-education>

## Objectives

To develop the following **attributes 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, 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 in order to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity.

To know, understand and present a balanced view of:

- 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.

## Outcomes

### INCLUSION AND ADAPTIVE TEACHING

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. (In looking at these questions, it is important to draw links to the school's inclusion policy). It is essential that all students are able to access the important themes and discussions in the RSE

curriculum. In line with our whole school adaptive teaching strategy, we will ensure that the curriculum is adapted in the classroom to enable students with additional needs to access the learning.

## **EQUALITIES OBLIGATIONS**

The Local Academy Committee have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all of 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.

## **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 RSE programme will cover, relationships including friendship and romantic relationships; Puberty, body image and social pressures of 'being perfect'; Marriage, including sacramental and civil marriage, contraception, and family life; challenging homophobia and biphobia; consent, and mental health; Sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and emotional consequences of sex; Sex and rape, sex and gender.

## **PROGRAMME / RESOURCES**

As a school we have invested in the RSE program designed and developed by Ten:Ten resources. This will be used in conjunction with lessons designed by the RSE Lead and RE team.

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- brainstorming
- film & video
- group work

Students work will be assessed through a mixture of teacher feedback for example on written outcomes exploring different understanding of a topic like marriage and, student self-reflection. Assessment will not be linked to graded outcomes as this is not appropriate for the content of these lessons.

(See also <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>)

## **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.

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 children's learning.

Parents were consulted before this policy was ratified by the governors. They will be consulted at every stage of the development of the RSE programme, as well as during the process of monitoring, review and evaluation. They will be able to view the resources used by the school in the RSE programme.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Sex Education except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum. Should parents wish to withdraw their children, they are asked to notify the school in writing by contacting the Headteacher or Assistant Head for Personal Development and Wellbeing.

We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed. Please refer to the DfE guidance Page 17 for further details on the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw)<sup>3</sup>.

## **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 (in secondary schools/academies 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**

Teaching the specific relationships and sex education programme is the responsibility of teachers of religious education and science.

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 may sometimes call upon help and guidance from outside agencies to support our delivery of RSE.

It is important that any external visitor is clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in school.

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.

## **OTHER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING RSE**

### **Governors**

- Review 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;

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<sup>3</sup> [Introduction to requirements - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-to-requirements-for-sex-education-introduction-to-requirements-for-sex-education)

- Establish link governors 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 Personal, Social, Health and Economic education.

### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Local Academy Committee, parents, the Diocesan Schools' Service, the Local Education Authority and appropriate agencies.

### **Assistant Head for Personal Development and Wellbeing**

The daily working of this policy is the responsibility of the Assistant Head for Personal Development and Wellbeing who, with the Headteacher, 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.

### **RSE Lead**

The RSE lead has responsibility for resourcing the RSE curriculum in line with the Ten:Ten curriculum. The RSE lead will ensure all resources follow this policy and that the content is updated as necessary in line with statutory guidance.

### **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. 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 to be delivered in conjunction with the PSHE framework. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents (for example, anti-bullying policy, Safeguarding Policy etc.)

Pupils with particular difficulties whether of a physical or intellectual nature will receive appropriately differentiated support in order 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.

The school has implemented Student Voice to provide space and opportunity for questions or concerns to be brought to our attention and addressed.

## **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 Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, Managing difficult questions, Page 23 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 hints at abuse, is deliberately biased or is of a personal nature (see below re safeguarding).

## **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 Safeguarding lead or deputy.

## **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 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 circumstance they are required to share this information with the designated Safeguarding lead or deputy

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The RSE Co-ordinator will monitor and evaluate 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 annually 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.