



Human Relationships and Sex Education Policy for St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Vision and Mission



'a small school with a big heart'

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Mission Statement

Our mission is to:

Guide all on their journey of faith

Nurture a love of learning

Encourage happiness, confidence and personal fulfilment

Support all in achieving their full potential

SCHOOL'S AIMS

God speaks to us through Jesus. He wants us to have life in all its fullness. We encourage our children and community to grow in love and understanding of God, God's people and God's world and motivate them to help those in need and care for each other, as Jesus Christ taught us to. All of our children will be happy and make good choices with the understanding that this will shape their lives for the better. We foster a dynamic interaction between home, parish and school to provide a happy, caring community in which everyone is valued and included. We support parents as educators of faith. Our Catholic school ethos is an outward representation of our vision where the Gospel is alive and underpins all aspects of daily school life. We want all of our children to know that they are loved by God and to love God, themselves and each other. Each individual child is resilient, caring and considerate and is fully equipped with the life skills and love of learning to prepare them well for life within and beyond our school. We see the beauty in everything as we grow together and appreciate our wonderful gifts and talents. We nurture children's gifts and work hard to know and understand each individual child's interests and needs. We search for excellence because our children deserve the very best all-round education to develop emotionally, socially, spiritually and academically. We always try our best.

Vision for Human Relationships and Sex Education

At St.Mary's' we are inspired by Jesus to be the very best we can be, as we grow in our journey of faith.. We look after one another and show respect and love through our relationships with one another. Jesus is invited into our hearts. In the Beatitudes, Jesus invites us to lead a full life with him by explaining what makes people blessed or happy. This is about understanding how loving our neighbour enables us to be happy too. Therefore, having a good relationship with ourselves and the other people in our lives makes us grow and flourish and we respect that everyone is a unique and beautiful part of God's creation. We are all children of God, called to grow in love for him through the person of Jesus Christ and to spread the Good News through the action of the Holy Spirit.

1. Procedures

The following groups have been consulted as part of producing this policy.

- staff
- governing body
- parents
- Diocesan Education Service
- Parish priest

In consultation with the Governing Body, the policy was implemented in September 2020, reviewed every year (last reviewed October 2025) , by the Head teacher, HRSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and school Staff. The next review date is September 2026.

2. Rationale

As a primary school in the Diocese of Lancaster Education Service, we use the term Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) as it believes that relationships education is about all aspects of growing a fulfilled and happy life, sexual education is a dimension of this greater whole.

The defining belief of Christianity is that we are all made in the image and likeness of God. This endows the human form with an extraordinary dignity that goes beyond that of all other forms of life and shows that humanity alone can embrace this relationship with God. Therefore, our relationship with our own bodies is not casual but infused with the Holy Spirit. Any teaching about love and sexual relationships in school is rooted in this belief which is expressed in the Church's teaching about relationships, marriage, sex and family life. The Church offers education to young people as it is part of complete human formation. Education about human love is no less a part of a Catholic school's responsibility than teaching about mathematics or English. At St Francis' we teach young people about how to form relationships, including understanding loving relationships and acknowledging that children's first experience of love is in the home. We encourage children from the earliest age to recognise that they are all children of God and that each person shares a God given dignity. As children mature, we encourage them to follow the example of Jesus and live lives inspired by the Gospel virtues, enabling them to follow His commandment to "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31). This is the basis for all relationships in our school. Teaching about relationships in our schools is supported by Christian virtue teaching as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and in line with 'Fit for Mission? Schools'.

The Department for Education in 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019) states that,

"to embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their well-being, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support." P.8

The Diocese recognises the value of these curriculum aims. However, Catholic schools also have regard for the spiritual welfare of the students and recognise that to know and love God brings lasting happiness.

3. Statutory framework

The statutory framework replaces Statutory Guidance: ‘Sex and Relationships Education Guidance’ (2000). The DfE states that it intends to update the guidance every three years

The statutory guidance is available from the DfE (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>). It should be read in conjunction with this Diocesan guidance and the following documents.

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool](#) (a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)
- [Behaviour and Discipline in Schools](#) (advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils)
- [Equality Act 2010 and schools](#)
- [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Alternative Provision](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#) (advice for schools)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) (advice for schools, including advice on [cyberbullying](#))
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools](#) (advice for schools)
- [The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance](#) (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- [Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools](#) (guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC)
- [SMSC requirements for independent schools](#) (guidance for independent schools on how they should support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development).
- [National Citizen Service](#) guidance for schools

Purpose of the Statutory Guidance

The guidance intends to help children and young people develop. The knowledge and attributes they gain will support their own, and others’, wellbeing and attainment and help young people to become successful and happy adults who make a meaningful contribution to society. The Diocese of Lancaster agrees with these aims and seeks to support them through the appropriate development of the HRSE provision.

The table summarises statutory obligations.

Relationships Education	Relationships and Sex Education	Health Education
All schools providing primary education, including all-through schools and middle schools (includes schools as set out in the Summary section).	All schools providing secondary education, including all-through schools and middle schools (see Summary section of statutory guidance).	All maintained schools including schools with a sixth form, academies, free schools, non- maintained special schools and alternative provision, including pupil referral units.

		<p>The statutory requirement to provide Health Education does not apply to independent schools – PSHE is already compulsory as independent schools must meet the Independent School Standards as set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Independent schools, however, may find the principles in the guidance on Health Education helpful in planning an age-appropriate curriculum</p>
<p>The statutory requirements do not apply to sixth form colleges, 16-19 academies or Further Education (FE) colleges, although we would encourage them to support students by offering these subjects. These settings may find the principles helpful, especially in supporting pupils in the transition to FE.</p>		

By the end of primary school, all children will be supported in preparing to transition to high school. They will have learned about the changes and choices they will face during adolescence, including both physical and emotional changes. In year 5 and 6 we learn about menstrual well-being and key facts about the menstrual cycle and puberty.

4. Requirements of the Diocese of Lancaster

The Bishop of Lancaster requires that all schools within the Diocese have a policy in line with Section 48 inspection requirements. (The term sex and relationships should be replaced in policies with human relationships and sex education.)

The key points within this guidance are as follows:

1. All schools must have an up-to-date HRSE policy that may incorporate Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education policy drawn up by the governing body, and available to parents and for inspection.
2. This should be developed in consultation with parents and the wider community.
3. Primary schools should have clear parameters on what children will be taught in the transition year before moving to secondary school, and that parents be consulted.
4. All schools’ policies must include how they will teach Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education.

5. Virtues and Values

Gospel virtues and values underpin the HRSE curriculum. The Christian tradition describes behaviours or habits that lead to happiness, human flourishing and a closer relationship with God as virtues. These virtues are described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and fall into two groups. The theological virtues of faith, hope and love are about developing the habits of being open to the work of the Holy Spirit and developing a deeper relationship with God through living a balanced and happy, good life. The cardinal virtues of practical wisdom (prudence), justice, fortitude and temperance help people develop habits of reason, fairness, emotional resilience and self-mastery. They are human virtues and, as such, are part of the development of people of all faiths or none as they learn how to flourish, thrive and to have a life supported by strong and caring relationships. The cardinal virtues are drawn from the teachings of Plato and Aristotle and are held in common with people of many faiths and secular beliefs. St. Thomas Aquinas attributes the theological virtues as having their foundation in God, they complete the cardinal virtues and are the way people can reach “the abundant life” (John 10:10).

At St. Mary's we live out the Gospel values shared in the Beatitudes, throughout the life of school by continuous modelling and referring to the Gospel Values and placing utmost importance on Christ's teachings and greatest legacy. The children have many opportunities in which to live out the Gospel Values, which are embedded as part of our daily school life. Daily class/whole school Prayer and Liturgy incorporates these values; assemblies, special weeks, masses, class celebration of the word, school behavioural expectations and fundraising are some examples of this. Prayer is an important part of school life and children are given opportunities to learn how prayer enables them to make space for God in their lives and offers opportunities for reflection and growth. By the end of year 6, children are able to explain some behaviour choices by reference to their beliefs and values, for example, by referring to Jesus' teachings about forgiveness.

The school promotes all pupils' Personal, Social, Emotional, Health, Spiritual, Moral and cultural development. PSHE is taught in all year groups through the SEAL (Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning) and is reinforced in weekly whole school assemblies tied in with Gospel Values. Prayer and Liturgy is part of everyday life and all staff encourage & promote good relationships by being role models for the children in showing respect, tolerance and kindness. We work hard to promote our Catholic ethos in every aspect of school life. Everyone has high expectations and works hard to develop not only spiritual awareness but also self-awareness, confidence and self-esteem in all pupils. Ofsted previously stated 'Pupils behavior is outstanding and they have excellent attitudes to learning.' Pupils feel safe in school and are happy. Issues are resolved quickly; pupils make restitution/reparation.

A very effective Dojo rewards system promotes positive behaviour and high esteem; points are awarded for a variety of reasons (categories compiled by school council), and totals are announced each Friday in each class with rewards given to individual pupils, with non-uniform days awarded to winning house team at the end of each half term. This gives children a sense of belonging and working for the good of others. Individual pupils are rewarded with the 'Golden Award' each week chosen by their teacher. Our year 6 children also present a 'big heart' award each week for someone they have noticed as living out the Gospel values.

All staff have good relationships with children and always ready to listen to any worries or concerns from children or parents. Staff will seek advice from other professionals or offer advice as needed. Children actively want to raise money to support charities locally and globally. The children run a Fairtrade and sustainably sourced snacks stall each week, initiate their own ideas for fundraising and take supporting each other very seriously. We have a range of initiatives for the children to develop their relationship skills, raise money through work around Catholic/local/national charities and work in our community on environmental projects. The children lead assemblies to look at ways our whole school can give aid or support work of others. Children visit local care homes to carol sing and play board games. We invite the local community into school for Coffee mornings, fundraising events and charity concerts where the children perform as part of school. Children prepare and take ownership of stalls at school functions such as school fairs to raise funds for CAFOD and our partner school in Kenya. Children also communicate with the Kenyan school, exchanging letters, photos and videos and have been involved in the progress of the development of the school since it was first founded.

Responses and views of children are promoted in many areas of curriculum through discussions/debates around a variety of issues. As a focus for every topic, children are encouraged to ask 'big ethical thinking questions', considering their views and responsibilities about a variety of global issues, listening to others' views respectfully. Children's views are sought regularly as part of School and Eco Council and through various clubs including CAFOD Club. Some of our Year 6 children are 'anti-bullying Ambassadors' and receive training through the Diana Award to develop their role within school in promoting wellbeing. A buddy system promotes friendships across all age ranges and pupils look out for each other, building strong friendships and a caring community within school. Links with local Police also rewards children who have been involved in positive contributions to community. Children visit high

schools to extend learning and support a smooth transition.

The school functions as an orderly, safe and corporate community. Behaviour is generally outstanding and never less than good; it is regularly commented upon by parents and visitors to school. Children's good manners and behaviour are noticeable around school every day. Each class establishes its own Classroom Code at the start of the academic year, based on Gospel values, British values and UNICEF's 'Rights for Every Child' and the school policy on behaviour and discipline has a clear statement of aims and objectives, a code of conduct, rewards and sanctions for behaviour. Children are trained within school to troubleshoot any low-level behavior. School prefects are exemplary role models to younger children and aim to lead by example.

Our 'Living, feeling, dreaming' curriculum informs pupils and invites them to consider ethical and moral issues with most children developing well in their attitudes. Our 'Ethical & World Thinking' strand of each topic allows the children to delve into a different issue each half term that they can debate, discuss and put big dreams into action. Examples include plastic pollution in our oceans, challenging stereotypes in careers and equality in our world. Recognising themselves as valued citizens and voices of their generation, they come up with ways to make small changes such as writing to our MP and local businesses, litter-picking, planting trees and campaigning for change in school and in our community. They learn about the importance of truth, justice and fairness and their understanding is demonstrated in the ways in which they are prepared to stand up and speak out when they believe that something is wrong. Our St. Mary's CAFOD School Council listen to ideas and discuss ways to action change. Members of the councils support the direction of the school, considering pupil voice.

Children in Reception class are given a Year 5 'buddy' who helps them throughout their first year in school. They support children in the dining hall, instigate playground games, read stories, sit with the children in Church and have many other important roles when making sure the children feel safe in their new school. The children continue to do this when they move into Year 6 and their buddies move into Year 1. In year 1 the children become 'reading buddies' and partner up to support the young readers. Children in Year 5 and 6 are Bible Buddies, sharing bible stories with younger pupils at lunchtime and planning follow-up tasks. Pupil relationships are very good; children are supportive of one another, tolerant and willing to help and support. The children lead the children and work hard to support each other. Children in junior classes create rotas independently to support younger children in their play outside and lead lunchtime clubs. A culture of care and thoughtfulness permeates the school and relationships between children and staff, staff with staff and all members of our school community are respectful and supportive. We greatly value kindness and care for our common home. Our aim is to bring our children closer to God and to know that they are loved by God with Christ as our role model.

6. The Aim and Objectives of HRSE.

The aim of HRSE is part of our aim to educate the complete human person. This is expressed in *Fit for mission? Schools* (2009).

The fundamental needs of the human person are the focus of Catholic education – intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual, and eschatological (Our eternal destiny). These fundamental needs can only be truly fulfilled through a rich and living encounter with the deepest truths about God and the human person.

This is why Christ and His Gospel must be the foundation of the educational project of each school and college, because He is ‘the perfect Man in whom all human values find their fullest perfection’ (Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*). Therefore, the Catholic school or college is called to keep the Gospel whole and alive amongst pupils, families, and staff.

HRSE should deepen the following areas of understanding.

- To develop self-respect and love of self.
- To invite young people to develop and deepen a loving relationship with God.
- To invite young people to understand that their life has a purpose.
 - To invite young people to develop and deepen relationships with each other based on mutual respect and care and to understand this can be an expression of God’s love.
- To foster an understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church about how to live a full life, a life of virtue, and the place of human sexuality in living a full life, marriage and parenthood.
- A strong awareness of their own safety and the nature of consent.
 - To have an understanding of the law in England about Equality and Marriage, appropriate to age and maturity.
- *We will seek to develop attitudes of awe and wonder for the gift and beauty of self, respect for each other as children of God and rejoice in the goodness of God’s creation.*
- *We will seek to develop attitudes of responsibility towards ourselves and others, recognising the dignity in all.*
- *We will seek to enable children to understand the choices they make and how they can help or harm themselves and others.*
- *We will encourage children to learn about expressing their own emotions and being respectful of the emotions and behaviours of others.*

- *We will encourage the whole school to be like a loving family recognising God as a merciful and generous father as Jesus taught in the Lord's prayer.*
- *We will encourage everyone in the school to recognise their part in the school family and work together for reconciliation when relationships in the school falter.*
- *We will encourage everyone in the school to value humility, mercy and compassion and to respond with empathy to the problems of others.*
- *We will develop children's knowledge of when to say 'no' to behaviours or attitudes that harm their dignity or the dignity of others and to be responsible for their own safety.*
- *We will develop children's experience of what it is to be happy so that they begin to understand the difference between happiness and gratification and value patience.*
- *We will teach children about the media and their choices, about what to watch, what games to play, what rules apply and that the dignity of all does not just apply to people who are physically seen, it applies to online relationships too.*
- *We will support children when relationships in their lives are challenging and teach them that there are people in school who will listen if they are experiencing changes that make them frightened or uncomfortable.*
- *We will foster an atmosphere in school which celebrates the work of the Trinity through the life of the school and its relationship with the Church.*
- *We will teach children about the beauty of the Church's teaching about love and God's love for them which is shared in the Sacraments.*
- *We will sensitively share the Church's teaching about the importance of marriage and family life as a way to live in loving relationships with others and with God.*
- *We will encourage children to understand difference and be mindful of people who are vulnerable to discrimination because of their personal or cultural characteristics.*

7. Inclusion

We identify that young people mature in different ways. Our teaching about relationships and sexuality is respectful of each child's starting point, their faith, culture and sexual orientation. Lessons are framed by this understanding and young people encouraged to respect and embrace difference and develop an approach of dialogue. This will always be done with discretion and sensitivity for children who need extra support.

8. Equality

The governing body has wide obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to ensure that St. Mary's endeavours to do its best for all of the pupils, irrespective of ability (physical and mental), race, ethnicity, nationality, maternity, pregnancy, sex, gender identity or orientation or whether they are looked after children. For additional information, you can find our existing equality policy on our school website.

9. Programme of study

A revised programme of study has been prepared to support educators in our family of schools as they enable our young people to grow in faith and understanding of themselves, their relationship with God and with one another. The Department for Education has prepared a statutory programme for 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' which will be a compulsory requirement from September 2020. The Diocese of Lancaster began working on Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) in 2016.

The intent of the programme of study is to encourage young people to recognise their interior beauty, their dignity as a human and through this to understand and value the worth of others. We hope that this builds on the experience of the home where, as children, we all experience our first expressions of love and form our early relationships. The challenge in school life is to develop this not just in an academic sense, but as a lived expression of belief ultimately, an invitation to hear the Good News.

“We must wonder! We must create an environment of wonder! We must create a climate of wonder! This task is closest to the family...Wonder is needed so that beauty might enter into human life, into society and the nation...We need to marvel at everything that is found in man.” Pope St. John Paul II

Creating a climate of wonder can seem a far cry from the modern world our schools are called to serve, though this is our calling as educators in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Lancaster. Engaging with the Church’s teaching about human loving enables us to share with our young people the wonder of human life and the happiness that is waiting for us in Jesus. As always, this is an invitation, a way to deepen understanding of what it means to be fully human.

The Programme of Study places the Diocese of Lancaster programme next to the statutory obligation it fulfils. Any additional material in HRSE is written in italics so it is easy to identify. Areas from the statutory plan not covered in the HRSE framework are listed at the end of the booklet. Governing bodies and head teachers should be mindful that from 2020 Ofsted will inspect the new ‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education’ and Section 48 will continue to examine provisions in HRSE.

HRSE is delivered in each class through a combination of stand-alone lessons from the TenTen Lie to the Full Plus Scheme of work, but also through the Science, computing and RE curriculums and within special designated weeks such as our Safety Week, Anti-Bullying week and Safer Internet Week. We use supporting resources including MyHappyMind, ‘A Journey in Love’ and NSPCC resources. Throughout the year, we welcome visitors from the NSPCC, police, paramedics (for First Aid), nurse, the Dog Trust and Fire Brigade. In Safer Internet Week, we invite parents to a workshop to share our learning and information about online safety. Year 6 children visit a local high school to take part in workshops

Progress in understanding is monitored and assessed both through the Science and RE curriculum and through responses within HRSE lessons. Wellbeing is monitored through our positive behavior policy. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for the choices they make and supported in developing their own resilience, self-confidence and relationships with others.

10. Parents

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children. The school should support parents in this task. The role of the school should be that of assisting and completing the work of parents, furnishing children and adolescents with an evaluation of *“sexuality as value and task of the whole person, created male and female in the image of God”*. (Educational Guidance in Human Love (1983) Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education n69) Children’s first experience of relationships and love are in the home. At our schools we seek to work with parents and support them as their children grow and begin to develop their own character as well as experiencing changes in their physical appearance. Parents have been consulted about this policy before it was ratified by the governing body.

It has been published on our school website for parents to see and give feedback upon. Should parents wish to withdraw their child(ren) from HRSE lessons, they must contact the headteacher no later than the start of the school day when the lesson will take place. The school will involve and support parents in learning about HRSE by sharing the programme of study, sending letters when visitors are coming to school, informing letters when a sensitive subject is to be taught, sending homework resources to use at home, information in school our school prospectus and on our school website. Information about HRSE is contained in the school prospectus and the majority of the programme of study is developed through the

ethos of the school. However, at times, areas of particular sensitivity, such as puberty, will benefit from additional parental support and at such times, letters will be sent home and parents may be invited into school to discuss the content of HRSE lessons.

Right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw)

Parents have the right to request that their child not participate in some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request, it would be good practice for the headteacher to discuss the application with parents and ensure that they understand the nature and purpose of the curriculum in a Catholic context. A discussion should follow, as appropriate, involving the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Schools will want to record and document this process. A good practice is also likely to include the headteacher discussing with parents the benefits of receiving this education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. For example, the possible social or emotional impact of withdrawal, the likelihood of them hearing a peer's version of the content, rather than the teacher's. However, parents may prefer to discuss sex education to their child at home instead.

Following discussions, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. This process is applicable for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the headteacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision. A process for the parental right to withdraw will form part of the policy.

11. Teaching and Assessing HRSE

Mr. Gilmour is the subject leader for HRSE and is the Head of School. He will lead and monitor the programme alongside the headteacher. Mrs. Doran is the named governor for overseeing this programme alongside the headteacher. Class teachers and experienced TA staff will deliver the curriculum and the school nurse will be involved as and when required. All staff are involved in fostering attitudes, living Gospel virtues and shaping behaviour based on a Christian understanding of how to lead a good life. Staff are called to be role models of the school's ethos in their relationships with other staff members, their conduct towards parents and their care for the children in the school. Staff who are not Catholic themselves must conduct their behaviour in school in accordance with the vision and mission of the school. Teaching and learning about human relationships will be part of the life of the school. However, the programme of study will be taught through cross-curricular dimensions where appropriate, such as R.E., science and computing. Sometimes, the children's learning will be best supported by using other agencies, such as the school nurse, or other visitors to school. Such visitors will be guided to read the protocol for visitors at St. Mary's and agree to follow its instruction. Sensitive subjects in HRSE always need to be framed so that the young people who are participating know that there is pastoral support if any of the issues discussed make them feel the need to talk further or share confidential information. This should always be done within the safeguarding framework of the school. All staff teaching HRSE have up-to-date safeguarding professional development. Questions asked by students that are a cause for concern for the teacher will be addressed in accordance with the school's safeguarding policy and confidentiality procedures. This is available on the school website.

There are elements of the statutory framework that are not covered in the Diocese of Lancaster's HRSE programme. These elements are listed at the end of the 2020 programme of study. Some of these elements are covered in the Science curriculum (healthy eating, the effects of drugs, alcohol and smoking, the benefits of an active lifestyle) and computing (internet safety). Other elements are covered during our annual safety week through an NSPCC workshop (eg. what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships, differences between appropriate and inappropriate contact, how to report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult or concerns of abuse). First aid is taught through practical workshops delivered by paramedics.

Each year at St Francis' we use the Diocesan self-audit to monitor all aspects of HRSE. Governors use the CES RSE audit tools to monitor their knowledge and understanding of this area. The HRSE framework and the elements of the statutory framework not covered by HRSE are monitored and assessed through whole school planning, written pieces of work, teacher's notes on discussions and targeted lesson evaluations. On occasion, the school uses questionnaires to evaluate students' sense of well-being and may use written or practical assessments where appropriate, for example, to evaluate understanding of basic first aid.

12. Dealing with difficult questions

The Governing Body desires that HRSE lessons take place in a positive framework, where students experience a growing appreciation for well-being, and that of others, and a deeper understanding that the Church teaches a path of the wholeness of mind, body and spirit. Part of this is creating an atmosphere where questions can be asked openly, knowing that their questions will be answered and understanding that staff or other students will not judge these questions. It is vital; therefore, that teachers invest time in creating this framework of mutual trust and care while respecting personal information. The HRSE co-ordinator must be given access to train and support to facilitate teachers to enable such discussions by creating carefully negotiated ground rules and distancing strategies. The Department for Education (2000) offers the following guidelines for dealing with questions.

- Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting. Many teachers are concerned about responding to unexpected questions or comments from pupils in a whole-class situation. Having a set of ground rules should reduce the chances of this happening, but teachers will need support and training so that they prepare for the unexpected. For example:
- If a question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupil of the ground rules. If the pupil needs further support, the teacher can refer her or him to the appropriate person, such as a school counsellor, school nurse, helpline, or an outside agency or service;
- If a teacher doesn't know the answer to a question, it is essential to acknowledge this, and to suggest that the pupil or teacher or both together research the subject later;
- If a problem is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. In this way, the pupil will feel they have received respectful treatment, but the rest of the class will not have to listen to personal experience or inappropriate information. To maintain trust and respect the teacher must remember to talk with the pupil later; and
- If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the school's child protection procedures.¹

Sensitive subjects in HRSE always need to be framed so that the young people who are participating know that there is pastoral support if any of the issues discussed make them feel the need to talk further

¹Sex and Relationships Guidance, 4.5 'Dealing with questions' 0116/2000

or share confidential information. The safeguarding framework of the school should frame this, and it is paramount that all staff teaching HRSE have up to date safeguarding professional development. Questions asked by students that are a cause for concern for the teacher, for example, because of their explicit or graphic content, should be addressed following the school's safeguarding policy and confidentiality procedures. This can be found on our school website.

The school will ensure that this policy is available for all staff, governors, parents and students and the confidential nature of how to obtain advice and guidance as a result of any issues or questions that may arise.

Students will be encouraged to talk to their parents or carers about issues and questions that arise as part of the programme. It will be made clear to all that unconditional confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where illegal or abusive concerns come to light, and these will be dealt with under the terms of the relevant policies (safeguarding policy).

13. Supporting children and young people deemed to be at risk.

Sensitive subjects in HRSE always need to be framed so that the young people who are participating know that there is pastoral support if any of the issues discussed make them feel the need to talk further or share confidential information. This should always be done within the safeguarding framework of the school and it is paramount that all staff teaching HRSE have up to date safeguarding professional development.

Questions asked by students that are a cause for concern for the teacher, for example because of their explicit or graphic content, should be addressed in accordance with the school's safeguarding policy and confidentiality procedures.

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HRSE Subject Leader

Miss Sarah Deakin
Headteacher

Mr Michael Blair

Chair of Governors

Date of ratification

October 2025

Date of review

September 2027