

# Holy Family Catholic High School & 6<sup>th</sup> Form



## RSE (Relationship and Sex Education) Policy

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| <b>Date Approved</b>      | <b>June 2024</b>     |
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| <b>Governor committee</b> | <b>Policy Review</b> |

The Governing Body believes that in order to enable effective teaching and learning to take place, good behaviour in all aspects of school life is necessary. It seeks to create a caring, learning environment in the school which derives from the injunction of Jesus to love our neighbours as ourselves. All pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff have a part to play in living and working according to the values of Christ.



## Holy Family Catholic High School & Sixth Form Centre



# Mission Statement

Inspired by the spirit of God:

**H**oly Family aspires to be a caring Catholic community,

**F**ollowing the example of Jesus,

**C**elebrating our talents and achievements,

**H**aving the ambition to be the best we can be,

**S**upporting each other in a secure and safe environment.

## **Defining Relationship 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 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. At Holy Family 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>(2)</sup>

## **Statutory curriculum requirements**

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. There is also a separate requirement for maintained secondary schools to teach about HIV, AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. 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’ (John.10.10)

All teaching about love and sexual relationships at Holy Family is rooted in the Catholic Church’s teaching about what it is to be truly human in Christ, what it means to live well in relationship with others and be presented within a positive framework of Christian virtue. 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, is 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 (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 whatever household they come from. It will also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

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1 Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 4

2 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

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.

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

**Objectives:**

By the end of KS4, we aim:

**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, 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 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

### **Definitions - Relationships and Sex Education**

As a Catholic school, we are guided by the DfE, whose guidance describes Relationships and Sex Education as follows:<sup>1</sup>

'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)."

In this we are guided by the Catholic Education Service, using their definition:<sup>2</sup>

'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.'

### **Parents and carers – including the right to be excused from RSE**

'The role of parents in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. Parents are the first teachers of their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships'.<sup>3</sup>

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 will support parents and carers by providing material, upon request, to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help parents/carers to find out more. Parents/carers will be informed by letter and email 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 will be consulted in developing and reviewing our policy and they will be able to view the resources we use.

We will also consult with teachers and pupils to ensure the policy reflects their views. We feel that listening and responding to the views of young people will strengthen the policy, ensuring that it meets their needs.

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<sup>1</sup> DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education 2019 updated 2021 pg25

<sup>2</sup> CES A Model Policy for Relationships and Sex Education 2016 revised 2020 pg1

<sup>3</sup> DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education 2019 updated 2021 pg17

Our aim is that, at the end of the consultation process, stakeholders will have full confidence in our RSHE programmes to meet their child's needs.

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request a discussion will take place with parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. A record of this will be kept. This discussion is likely to include informing the parents/carers of the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher (although the detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead).

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school should 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 the same for pupils with SEND. However there may be exceptional circumstances where a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND are taken into account when making this decision.

If a pupil is excused from sex education, we will ensure that they receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education Health Education.<sup>4</sup>

### **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.

#### **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 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.

#### **RSE subject overview**

RSE will continue to develop pupils' knowledge on the topics taught at a primary level, in addition to the content outlined in this section.

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<sup>4</sup> DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education 2019 updated 2021 pgs17-18

**The RSE curriculum will:**

1. Cover the statutory requirements for relationship and sex education and citizenship to all year groups within the school.
2. Provide high quality teaching and learning which is inclusive, appropriately differentiated and which responds to the needs of all pupils in order to enable them to achieve.
3. Equip pupils with the knowledge and skills needed to make well informed decisions about their lives.
4. Help and support pupils through their physical, emotional and moral development.
5. Promote spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and of society preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life

## **Themes covered in RSE:**

### **Equality, sexual harassment and violence:**

- To understand the importance of gender equality and the power of language.
- To understand what is considered sexism, sexual harassment and sexual violence including sexual comments, remarks, jokes, taunting, 'banter', physical behaviour, online sexual harassment.
- To understand that sexual harassment and violence can happen to any one of any age and gender in any setting.
- To understand why as a school and society we do not tolerate sexism, sexual harassment and violence.
- To recognise unsafe behaviour and attitudes relating to gender, sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- To recognise their responsibility to challenge and report sexism, sexual harassment and violence.

### **Consent:**

- The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships.
- How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online).



### **Families:**

- That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- What marriage is, including its legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.
- Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.
- The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships
- The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to the raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
- How to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.

### **Respectful relationships, including friendships:**

- The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship.
- Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.
- How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice).
- That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs.
- About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.
- That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.
- The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.

### **Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health:**

- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship.
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause.
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available.
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage.
- that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help).
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing.
- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.
- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

### **Online and media:**

- Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.
- About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online.
- Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them.
- What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.
- The impact of viewing harmful content.
- That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners.
- That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail.
- How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online

## **The Law and Being Safe**

During each RSE session, pupils are informed about the law surrounding RSE topics:

- Marriage
- consent, including the age of consent
- violence against women and girls including upskirting, exploitation, online and offline behaviours.
- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- pornography
- abortion
- sexuality
- gender identity
- substance misuse
- violence and exploitation by gangs
- extremism/radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- hate crime

## **Physical health and mental wellbeing<sup>5</sup>**

DfE guidance '*Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education*' details the requirements of Physical health and mental wellbeing education. Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required. By the end of secondary school pupils should know:

### **Mental wellbeing**

- how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.
- that happiness is linked to being connected to others.
- how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns.
- common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression).
- how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health.
- the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.

### **Internet safety and harms**

- the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image), how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships including social media, the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online.
- how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours

### **Physical health and fitness**

- the positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress.

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<sup>5</sup> DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education 2019 updated 2021 pgs36-38

- the characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardiovascular ill-health.
- about the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.

### **Healthy eating**

- how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer

### **Drugs, alcohol and tobacco**

- the facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions.
- the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.
- the physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood.
- the physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency.
- awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks.
- the facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.

### **Health and prevention**

- about personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics.
- about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist.
- (late secondary) the benefits of regular self-examination and screening.
- the facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination.
- the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.

### **Basic first aid**

- basic treatment for common injuries.
- life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR.
- the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed.

### **Changing adolescent body**

- key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual wellbeing.
- The main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.

### **Our programme:**

Holy Family Catholic High School believes that RSE is an education entitlement of all pupils and an integral part of each pupil's emergence into adulthood. We believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, our school ethos endeavours 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" which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

Our RSE programme enshrines core pedagogical virtues. It is progressive and developmental and reflects each stage of the development of the person. The RSE curriculum is appropriate to the age and stage of development of our pupils during the different phases of their education which leads to a deeper and fuller understanding by degrees at a rate which corresponds to their maturing.

As a Catholic school we are committed to the education of the whole person. Teaching on relationships and sexuality needs to be reflected in each relevant part of the curriculum.

Some aspects of RSE are explored in science lessons and some more are explored in RE

lessons, however each is informed by the other and tied together through PSHE. Each discipline speaks with consistency about the meaning of human love and the virtues that are enshrined in the Church's teaching on human love.

### **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.

### **Delivery of RSE:**

At Holy Family, all teaching staff are committed to delivering the highest quality lessons as part of the PSHE programme. Within this, we have developed a large team of specialist RSE teachers to ensure that the specific RSE content is delivered in a sensitive, engaging and age-appropriate manner.

Through effective organisation and delivery of the personal development curriculum, the school will ensure that:

- Core knowledge is sectioned into units of a manageable size.
- The required content is communicated to pupils clearly, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned scheme of work.
- Teaching includes sufficient and well-chosen opportunities and contexts for pupils to embed new knowledge so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations.

RSE complements several other curriculum subjects, including Science, RE, Drama, English and Health and Social Care. Where appropriate, the school will look for opportunities to make links between the subjects and integrate teaching. The personal development curriculum will be delivered by appropriately trained members of staff. The curriculum will proactively address issues in a timely way in line with current evidence on pupils' physical, emotional and sexual development.

RSE will be delivered in a non-judgemental, age-appropriate, factual and inclusive way that allows pupils to ask questions in a safe environment.

Teaching of the curriculum reflects requirements set out in law, particularly in the Equality Act 2010, so that pupils understand what the law does and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of the decisions they make.

Holy Family Catholic High School will integrate LGBTQ+ content into the RSE curriculum – this content will be taught as part of the overall personal development curriculum, rather than a standalone topic or lesson. LGBTQ+ content will be approached in a sensitive, ageappropriate and factual way that allows pupils to explore gender identity, stereotypes, and the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships. All pupils are expected to learn about LGBTQ+ content, and parents do not have a statutory right to withdraw their children from lessons that include LGBTQ+ content. At all points this content will be taught with due consideration of our Catholic ethos.

At Holy Family, we ensure that we comply with the relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and do not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil

partnership or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).<sup>6</sup>

We take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting one group because of a protected characteristic; and we take this into consideration in designing and teaching Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education.

We also consider the makeup of our student body, including the gender and age range, when considering whether it is appropriate or necessary to put in place additional support for pupils with particular protected characteristics (which mean that they are potentially at greater risk).

We are alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotyping and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated. Any occurrences are identified and tackled.

We are particularly aware of current evidence on the preponderance in schools and colleges of sexual violence and sexual harassment between children. We make it clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up. Any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly.

The curriculum will be designed to focus on pupils of all gender identities and expressions and activities will be planned to ensure all are actively involved. The school will ensure it delivers teaching on sensitive topics, e.g. the body, in a way that is appropriate and sensitive to the various needs of the school community, e.g. cultural background. All teaching and resources will be assessed by the leaders of the Personal Development programme in conjunction with the Head of RE and specialist SEND teachers to ensure they are appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils, are sensitive to our Catholic ethos and meet the needs of any pupils with SEND, if applicable.

Throughout every year group, appropriate diagrams, videos, books, games, discussion and practical activities will be used to assist learning. Inappropriate images, videos, etc., will not be used, and resources will be selected with sensitivity given to the age and cultural background of pupils. Pupils will be prevented from accessing inappropriate materials on the internet when using such to assist with their learning. Teachers will establish what is appropriate for one-to-one and whole-class settings, and alter their teaching of the programmes accordingly.

Teachers will ensure that pupils' views are listened to and will encourage them to ask questions and engage in discussion. Teachers will answer questions sensitively and honestly.

Teachers will focus heavily on the importance of healthy relationships, including marriage, when teaching RSE, though sensitivity will always be given as to not stigmatise pupils on the basis of their home circumstances. In teaching the curriculum, teachers will be aware that pupils may raise topics such as self-harm and suicide. When talking about these topics in lessons, teachers will be aware of the risks of encouraging these behaviours and will avoid any resources or material that appear as instructive rather than preventative. Lessons will be developed in conjunction with the Mental Health Lead and pupils who could be at risk of being triggered by such sensitive topics will be identified and a more bespoke lesson will be arranged for them, in a smaller group, with more specialist support.

Teachers will ensure lesson plans focus on challenging perceived views of pupils based on protected characteristics, through exploration of, and developing mutual respect for, those

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<sup>6</sup> DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education 2019 updated 2021 pg13

different to themselves. In conjunction with their Science lessons, Pupils will be taught the anatomically correct names for body parts; the school will dispel myths and will also understand other names of body parts that can sometimes be used to replace the correct terminology.

Lessons around keeping safe and how certain parts of the body should be private must be addressed to ensure pupils are not left vulnerable.

The school provides regular professional development training in how to deliver sex education; this includes sessions on confidentiality, setting ground rules, handling controversial issues, responding to awkward questions and an introduction to the rationale of why teaching RSHE is so important.

Staff training will include sessions on how to deal with difficult questions. There may still be times when staff are faced with a difficult question in class that they feel uncomfortable or ill equipped to answer. In this case, they may wish to put the question to one side and seek advice from leaders.

### **Responsibility for teaching the programme**

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lies with the leaders of the Personal Development team and the members of staff in the specialist relationships team, who are delivering that particular lesson during the half term. 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 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 specialist 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 in the school Safeguarding Policy. 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 Catholic 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;
- 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 Board, parents, the Archdiocesan Schools' Service and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

#### **Personal Development Leads**

The PD Leads with the Head Teacher have 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 may be supported by the Deputy Headteachers and the Assistant Headteacher who is also the DSL.

### **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.

### **Relationship to other policies and curriculum subjects**

This RSE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHE framework. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents (for example, 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. Learning about RSE in PSHE classes will link to/complement learning in those subject areas identified in the RSE audit.

### **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 matter 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. 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 tendentious or is of a personal nature. If this happens, adults will tell the pupil/pupils at the time that they will speak to them after the lesson. A record of the discussion will be made and parents/carers made aware if necessary.

### **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.

### **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 monitoring and evaluation of the RSE curriculum and delivery is regular and ongoing and used to inform subsequent lessons. It takes a number of forms, including the following:

1. Regular feedback from Year Teams, Form Tutors and Progress Leaders
2. Learning walks conducted by PSHE team, the Senior Leadership team and Progress Leaders
3. The use of Pupil Voice
4. The scrutiny of work completed by pupils in the lessons

The PSHE curriculum and programme is reviewed annually by the PSHE Coordinators in conjunction with members of the Senior Leadership team and School Governors.