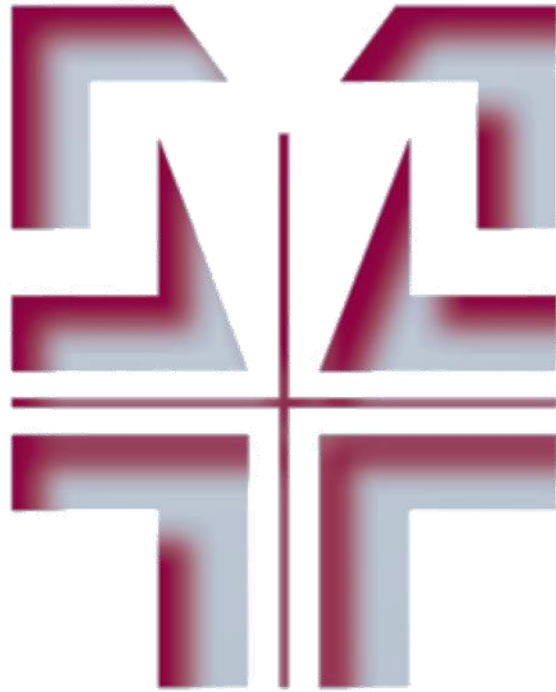


# Saint Michael's CE High School

*A Church of England Academy*



**Therefore, choose**

## **Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy**

<b>Responsibility to present to Headteacher</b>	Deputy Head – Caroline Hooley
<b>Approved</b>	Ethos, Staffing & Wellbeing Committee May 2024
<b>Next Review</b>	Ethos, Staffing & Wellbeing Committee May 2026
<b>Statutory</b>	Yes
<b>Required on school website</b>	Yes

**ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL**

**A BRIEF SUMMARY OF OUR CHRISTIAN VISION**

Our motto is **'Therefore choose [life]'** from Deuteronomy.



We understand this to mean growing in **body, mind and spirit**, so that all who learn and work here may flourish, experiencing the joy and hope of **'Life in all its fullness'**.

**This is further explained in our Mission Statement,**

*'As a vibrant learning community  
we choose to serve God,  
pursue excellence  
and celebrate the uniqueness of each individual.'*

## **St Michael's Church of England High School – Relationships and Sex Education Policy**

This policy covers our school's approach to Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). It was produced by Mrs D Brotherton, Curriculum Leader for Living Education, through consultation with the Governors, the Senior Leadership Team and a group of parents/carers. The policy is available to parents/carers via the school website and if preferred, a printed copy is available from the front office at school. This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Christian principles and values are at the heart of our Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) programme at St Michael's Church of England High School. The Governors have determined that RSHE will be appropriate to the pupil's stage of development and will be presented with reference to our Christian values and ethos whilst ensuring that our statutory duties are met under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Equalities Act 2010. It fits within the context of our planned programme of PSHE and Citizenship, known within school as 'Living Education'. The programme will be led, managed and regularly reviewed by the Curriculum Leader for Living Education, and taught by tutors with the support of Teaching Assistants where appropriate.

### ***Philosophy and Values***

This Governing Body supports the foundation statement of the school in its overall philosophy of Relationships, Sex and Health Education. Our school's overarching aims are:

*'To provide a distinctly Christian education which is relevant to young people in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' and 'To provide an outstanding education for our young people'.*

With this in mind, we define 'Relationships, Sex and Health Education' (RSHE) as learning about positive and negative relationships, emotions, families, consent, conflict, sexuality, sexual health, and ourselves.

We believe that RSHE should be accessible and relevant for all of our pupils, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. This is including those with physical, mental or emotional difficulties and those with or without a religious or faith tradition – everyone, whatever their background, community, experience or circumstance.

We consider that RSHE includes information about the things young people need to know to stay safe and to form and maintain healthy relationships. These include the emotional, biological, legal, social and cultural aspects of growing up and being part of a family or community as well as sexual development, sexual behaviour, sexuality and sexual health. Pupils must be made aware of the potential consequences of harmful relationships, unprotected sex and poor maintenance of emotional wellbeing as well as understanding the effects of manipulation or abuse within relationships. Pupils also learn about the potential damage caused by ignorance, prejudice, discrimination and stigma on their communities and their own worldview. Both during lessons and via the

Wellbeing pages on our school website and Moodle, pupils are signposted to websites (e.g. Winston's Wish, Childline, NSPCC, NHS websites, Young Minds, Healthy Young Minds, Lancashire Youth Zone, Anxiety UK, etc – a full list can be found on the Wellbeing pages of the school's Moodle) as well as helplines (e.g. Kooth, Lancashire TalkZone, Samaritans, Childline), local services and relevant people within school so that they can seek further advice and support should they require it.

We believe it is important for this area of the curriculum to give pupils help in developing a positive attitude to sexual health and personal wellbeing through their relationships to and with others. Sexual desire and activity is not only a given fact of human existence but in Christian belief, a gift of God as part of Creation. It is important that, as they grow up, children come to an understanding of the stewardship of their own bodies, instincts and feelings. In this way they will be better prepared for the opportunities, joys, risks and responsibilities of adult relationships.

Children need to glimpse something of the wonder and security of family relationships and consider safe contexts for their own sexual expression. They should be able to see the relevance of the Christian values of acceptance, stewardship, respect and forgiveness through a deepening understanding of what it is to love another "as yourself".

A responsible attitude towards sexual activity and an understanding of our own roles in relationships can lead to a positive sense of personal identity and value, and greater personal fulfilment. Young people should be taught to recognise that lasting successful relationships require maturity, good self-esteem, self-discipline, a will to work for the other person and being resistant to negative influences. Marriage as a context for family life and bringing up children is discussed as the ideal for many Christians in relationship, whilst other family setups in modern Britain, including those without children are also considered.

As pupils mature, our school can make a distinctive and unique contribution to their education by placing RSHE within a context of love, faithfulness and compassion as well as allowing pupils to explore an increasing awareness of their individual and social responsibilities before God. In this way it is hoped that they will become more autonomous and equipped to make the right choices for themselves and for those whom they love.

### ***Aims of Relationships, Sex and Health Education***

In considering the aims for RSHE, due regard will be given to the special needs and learning difficulties of some of our children and to the age/maturity of the children, which is why the learning is stepped in line with the latest PSHE Association guidance, and follows their spiral curriculum model. It is also recognised that the broader issue of Health Education does not begin and end in the classroom. The subtle messages that pupils receive about healthy relationships from the daily life of a school are as important as those given during lessons. RSHE is concerned with questions of attitudes, values, relationships, emotions and self-awareness. It is concerned with fostering a child's positive self-image and self-esteem and promoting positive attitudes towards

relationships, love and sexuality whilst giving them the confidence and understanding which will allow them to recognize and avoid risky behaviours and influences later in life.

The aims of RSHE are much more than teaching the biological facts of life, though we must ensure that children acquire accurate factual knowledge regarding sexual development and health in order to mitigate possible misunderstandings and irrational fears. The skills of reasoning and self-regulation along with knowledge are vital if our young people are to make responsible and informed choices about their relationships and sexual health, now and in the future.

In line with statutory guidance, our RSHE programme includes:

1. Information about puberty, personal hygiene, menstruation and sexual organs.
2. Self-regulation: how to be your best self in relationships, understanding your rights and responsibilities and how to recognise manipulation or abuse.
3. Social 'norms' and an awareness of the variety of different lifestyles and families in Britain today.
4. Recognising the influence of media portrayals and commercialisation of relationships and sex, including pornography.
5. Understanding the importance of ongoing and informed consent and 'readiness' for sex.
6. Reproduction and the many forms of contraception.
7. STIs including Chlamydia and HIV.
8. The choices available in the case of unplanned pregnancy (the moral issues surrounding abortion and religious attitudes towards it are also dealt with in RE)
9. Maintaining good physical and mental health through responsible lifestyle choices and developing self-awareness

RSHE forms an essential part of our PSHE programme, and is just one of the contexts through which our pupils are given the opportunity to:

- become more aware of the consequences of their actions;
- develop an awareness of and respect for themselves and others;
- explore approaches to resisting media and peer pressure
- understand the importance of self-regulation and managing risk

Christian Values are central to the RSHE programme. The value of Christian wisdom enables pupils to consider the God who made them and how this will affect their speech, thoughts, choices and actions. Compassion and forgiveness are considered in the context of a healthy relationship - human beings may often fall short of the ideal but the recognition of imperfection can help to foster an understanding of the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation within relationships.

In addition, the RSHE programme aims to provide a framework for the child to:

- become more aware of the consequences of their actions;
- develop an awareness of and respect for themselves and others;
- understand and evaluate reasons for delaying first sex (including Church teaching);
- make informed choices about their lifestyle and health;

- acquire approaches to resisting media or peer influence and to make meaningful links to their prior learning around alcohol and drugs.

### ***Legislation***

Under the Education Act 2002/ Academies Act 2010 all schools are required to provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum which:

- *Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical developments of pupils at the school and of society, and*
- *Prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.*

RSHE is set within a wider legislative context. The 2006 Education and Inspections Act laid a duty on Governing Bodies *'to promote the wellbeing of pupils at the school'*. The duty came into effect in September 2007. Since that date, an equivalent requirement has been placed on new academies through their funding agreements.

Provisions made in 2020 under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 made both relationships and sex education and health education statutory in all secondary schools, including academies. A duty was also placed on schools to work with parents to create, develop and share a policy on Relationships, Sex and Health Education.

### ***Challenging questions***

Sometimes a pupil will, in the classroom, ask an explicit question which may relate to the discussion of sensitive, difficult or controversial topics. It is important that children feel able to ask any questions that they have and they can feel that their questions are valued. However, it is the policy of the school that such questions do not have to be answered directly or immediately 'on the spot'. If necessary, teachers also need to feel able to ask the child to wait for an answer to give them time to consult with the Curriculum Leader or senior leadership team. *(For instance: 'That is a really interesting question and I need a little time to think because I want to give you a really good answer.')* Teachers' answers to sensitive questions should be reflective of school policy and they should therefore feel able to work with colleagues to construct an appropriate answer in such situations. Some tutors feel comfortable using an anonymous 'question box' in their classroom where pupils who might not feel comfortable raising a question in an open setting may ask questions to be responded to at a later date. The school always expects teachers to use their professional skills and discretion in such cases, and always to keep in mind the age and maturity of the pupil, as well as the aims, values and procedures set out in this document. If he/or she is in doubt, he/she will consult the Curriculum Leader for Living Education in the first instance. Guidance on the teaching of sensitive issues such as pornography and FGM, along with more general guidance on the use of ground rules and the use of distancing techniques has been made available to staff alongside the subject resources on the shared area. Whole staff team refresher

training is also offered periodically as part of our School Improvement Meeting programme.

**Teachers are aware that effective RSHE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. If we have any reason to believe a pupil is at risk, we are required to take appropriate action in accordance with the school's policies and procedures for Child Protection. This also means that if a pupil puts a private question to a teacher or other member of staff and requests secrecy, no promise of secrecy or confidentiality will be given, but with the reassurance that any steps taken will always be in the pupil's best interests. Any critical incidents or disclosures are reported to the Pupil Manager and/or the DSL, as per school protocol. In addition, all staff are made aware of their duty to report to the Police any suspicion that they might have of FGM potentially taking (or having taken) place.**

### ***Sexuality and gender***

All teaching should recognise the value of the unique worth of each individual and for this reason prejudice, victimization and bullying of any kind (including the use of homosexual slang) are contrary to the school's Christian values and policies and will not be tolerated. The school's views are in line with those expressed by The Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby in the Church of England 2017 Guidance, entitled 'Valuing All God's Children' when he says:

*'Central to Christian theology is the truth that every single one of us is made in the image of God. Every one of us is loved unconditionally by God. We must avoid, at all costs, diminishing the dignity of any individual to a stereotype or a problem. Church of England schools offer a community where everyone is a person known and loved by God, supported to know their intrinsic value.'*

*'This guidance helps schools to offer the Christian message of love, joy and the celebration of our humanity without exception or exclusion.'*

Children will be aware that some people seek sexual relationships with people of the same sex. The existence of a range of Christian views about this is recognised. In 'Valuing All God's Children', further guidance is given that, *'the curriculum should offer opportunities for pupils to learn to value themselves and their bodies. Relationships and sex education should take LGBT people into account. Sexual orientation should be included within RS(H)E in the secondary phase. The Church of England's teaching on human sexuality and a range of Christian views should be taught, as well as a range of perspectives from other faiths and world views'*.

Homosexuality and transsexuality exist within our human family, and it is statistically very likely that a number of our pupils will live their lives in ways which do not fit with

traditional gender roles, or in non-heterosexual relationships. Our education programme at St. Michael's would be failing all our children if it simply pretended that the LGBTQ+ community did not exist, either by hindering understanding on the part of those who consider themselves part of that community, or by denying key understanding to those who do not. Playground gossip plays an important role in the spread of misinformation around sexuality and gender; we believe that our school has a genuine educative and human role to play here. It is the school's responsibility to deal with questions about sexual orientation, gender identity and different kinds of relationships in a sensitive, balanced, factual and honest way, taking account of children's age, maturity and background and paying due regard to our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Tutors are in the best position to know the needs of the pupils in their tutorial and to adapt their teaching to suit these specific requirements.

### ***'Right of Withdrawal'***

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. They also make Health Education compulsory in all schools except independent schools.

This guidance also sets out both the rights of parents/carers to withdraw pupils from Sex Education (but not Relationships or Health Education) and the process that Headteachers should follow in considering a request from a parent. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of Sex Education delivered as part of statutory RSHE. This right extends only up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. At this point, the 2019 statutory guidance allows any affected pupil who wishes to receive Sex Education to request this, and school has a duty to provide such education.

The guidance states that the Headteacher will make the decision on whether a child can be excused from Sex Education, and that there is an expectation that this will be granted in most cases. However, any parent wishing to make this decision will first be invited to discuss their concerns with the Curriculum Leader, who will seek to listen and respond to these concerns, whilst articulating the benefits of participation and potential disadvantages to any pupil who might miss this work.

Broad areas of content will be covered both in Living Education lessons and as part of our Curriculum Enrichment programme, during off-timetable days, and the Governors recognise that relevant discussion may also take place in other curriculum areas. The Governors also recognise that the Science curriculum also covers human reproduction. The right of withdrawal does not extend to any content within the Science curriculum.

We remind parents when RSHE is being delivered by sending letters via School Comms at least once per year. In this letter we also remind parents how to contact school



should they have any questions, and at this point it is their responsibility to request withdrawal of their child if they so wish. In the first instance a meeting would usually be arranged with the Curriculum Leader so that she and the parent(s) can look at the lessons together, with a view to informing their decision. Should they still wish to proceed in withdrawing their child, a meeting would be then arranged with the Headteacher. Whilst the School will generally grant such requests, the Governors do believe that a well-planned programme of RSHE, embedded within the school's offer is of vital importance for every child at this school.

If a parent does request that their child be removed from Sex Education, the school will make arrangements for their child to work elsewhere in school during these lessons.

### ***The Living Education programme at St Michael's***

At St Michael's, RSHE is taught primarily by the form tutor as part of our Living Education programme, with some individuals being taught elements of PSHE on occasion by the SENCO as part of their provision in the Personalised Learning Centre, or by the Curriculum Leader, as appropriate to their needs. Each tutor has access to long-term plans and a bank of interactive lesson resources, created by the Curriculum Leader for each session. At the beginning of each academic year, every group works with their tutor to create a set of 'rules for respectful discussions' – these are then written onto a class agreement poster which is displayed in each tutorial room and referred to during the year as necessary.

The programme is delivered through a range of teaching methods, including:

- small group and class discussions,
- role-play,
- socratic questioning and quizzes,
- cooperative learning strategies, (such as Kagan activities)
- videos followed by discussion,
- case studies

The most effective RSHE is a collaboration between school and home. We are committed to working with parents and carers. We will offer support to parents and carers by offering those interested an opportunity to come into school to view the resources and discuss the programme with the Curriculum leader prior to the teaching of these units. Long term plans are available through the school website, and parents will be of course be informed of any major changes to the RSHE programme.

The school's work is also supported by local services. The 'Wize Up' clinic is open Mondays 6-8pm at Collison Avenue, Chorley, whilst the Leyland health clinic takes place at the Youth Centre on West Paddock between 3-5pm on a Thursday. Lancashire County Council offer 'Youth Zone' services including advice and support regarding sexual health and access to contraception through their website, facebook and twitter accounts. They also offer advice through the 'Talk Zone' by telephone, text or online chat. These are all signposted during Living Education lessons and on the school Moodle (via the Wellbeing

Hub). Pupils are also regularly signposted to the school nurse for any health concerns, as well as being reminded to be extremely cautious about any health information they pick up online.

### ***Assessment and monitoring***

Learning is informally assessed by tutors during lessons, through the use of baseline and assessment activities including mindmaps, write and draw activities, debates and discussions. Progress is monitored by tutors and any concerns discussed with the Curriculum Leader. The Curriculum Leader delivers whole-school or pastoral team training to staff as required to meet the needs of the curriculum. Lower school tutor teams undergo yearly training in the delivery of lessons regarding FGM, and each year the Curriculum Leader provides training for all new tutors as part of the school's induction programme. The Curriculum Leader also steps in to deliver the contraception workshop sessions to our Year 9 pupils, and is happy to support, team-teach or deliver sessions on other sensitive topics when requested.

Lessons within the scheme are updated on an ongoing basis by the Curriculum Leader to be responsive to school, local and wider community events (for example in response to the Covid-19 pandemic).

Delivery of the programme is monitored as part of the 'open classrooms' initiative, and good practice is shared at Pupil Managers' meetings. The curriculum leader attends Pupil Managers' meetings as appropriate to disseminate information, ensure compliance and gather feedback. Extra training is provided as needed to tutor teams or individuals, and in order to keep her subject knowledge up-to-date, the Curriculum Leader regularly attends training events with the PSHE Association throughout the year, including their bi-annual conferences.

In addition, the school has procedures for the regular and systematic monitoring and evaluation of all curriculum areas. Day to day monitoring is the responsibility of the Curriculum Leader for Living Education. Feedback is gathered from pupils through the use of a pupil voice meeting, and issues raised through school council where appropriate. School also gathers data periodically through the use of online questionnaires.