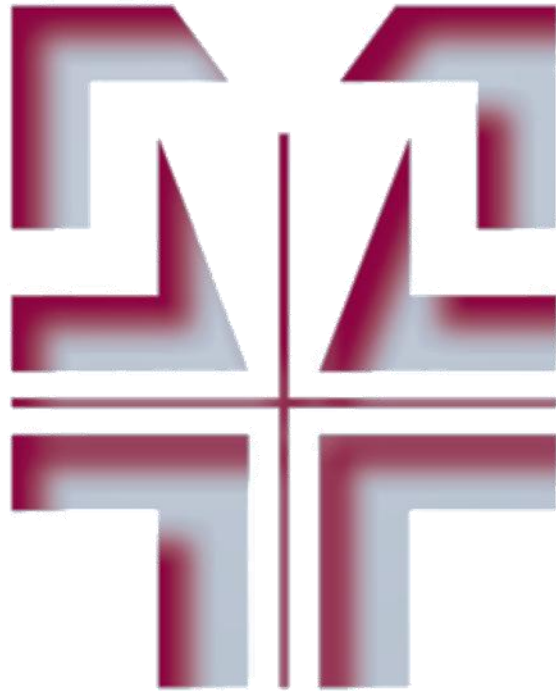


Saint Michael's CE High School

A Church of England Academy



Therefore, choose

Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

Responsibility to present to Headteacher	Deputy Head – Caroline Hooley
Approved	Ethos, Staffing & Wellbeing Committee May 2026
Next Review	Ethos, Staffing & Wellbeing Committee May 2028
Statutory	Yes
Required on school website	Yes

Our mission statement: As a vibrant learning community, we choose to serve God, pursue excellence and celebrate the uniqueness of each individual.



Our vision: *Growing in body, mind and spirit*

I have come that you might have life – life in all its fullness. **John 10:10**



Therefore choose [life]
Deuteronomy 30:19

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 Personal and Spiritual Development, 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 'personal and spiritual development'. The programme will be led, managed and regularly reviewed by the Curriculum Leader, and taught by tutors with the support of Teaching Assistants where appropriate.

In line with our vision of 'growing in body, mind and spirit', RSHE at St Michael's explicitly supports pupils' spiritual development. Lessons include planned opportunities for pupils to reflect on their relationship with themselves, with others, with creation and with God, using age-appropriate activities and reflection points within the curriculum. These moments allow pupils to explore identity, emotions, relationships, values and responsibility, helping them to develop self-awareness, compassion, respect and moral understanding within the context of the Christian values.

Inclusive Philosophy and Values

This Governing Body supports the foundation statement of the school in its overall philosophy of relationships, sex and health education.

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, the online world and ourselves.

We believe that RSHE should be accessible and relevant for all of our pupils, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, or any special needs. This includes 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 and community as well as sexual development, sexual behaviour, sexuality and sexual health. Pupils must be made aware of the potential consequences of harmful relationships or behaviours, unprotected sex and poor maintenance of emotional wellbeing as well as understanding the effects of manipulation, coercion 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 each lesson and via the wellbeing pages on our school website, 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.) Pupils are also signposted to local services and the pastoral team 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 can also 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 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 more positive sense of personal identity and value, and greater personal fulfilment. Young people should be taught to recognise that lasting successful relationships require maturity, respect, good self-esteem, self-discipline, good communication skills, 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 relationships, whilst other family setups in modern Britain, including those without children are also considered.

As pupils mature, our Christian 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.

Increasingly, young people spend much of their time in online spaces. It is with this in mind that from 2026-27 the programme will place much more emphasis on understanding and evaluating the risks of some online interactions with others. As per the statutory guidance pupils will be made aware of the role of algorithms, AI and technology companies in shaping their experience by manipulating the content they are being shown. They will also be given space to reflect on their emotional responses and

their responsibility to be mindful by curating their own experiences using moderation and reporting tools. In addition, the new content will help to equip pupils with the skills, knowledge and attributes they need to manage their money and spending online, resisting influences to gamble and minimising the chance of becoming a victim of fraud via various scams.

Aims of Relationships, Sex and Health Education

In considering the aims for RSHE, due regard will be given to the special needs and developmental stage of our children, which is why 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.

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, critical thinking and self-regulation along with this 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, including marriage.
4. Recognising the influence of media portrayals and commercialisation of relationships and sex, including pornography, deep fakes and AI generated nudes.
5. Understanding the importance of ongoing and informed consent and considering '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.
10. Financial capability in online contexts.
11. The opportunities and potential risks of a proliferation of AI generated content and chat-bots.

12. The marketisation of attention through algorithms on social media sites and how to resist pressures on their attention from online distractions.

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, including empathy
- 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 nature of the God who made them and how this might influence 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 other drugs
- understand the importance of ending relationships well, and strategies to do this

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. This statutory

guidance was further strengthened and revised in September 2025, with schools given until September 2026 to meet the new requirements.

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, they should consult the Curriculum Leader for Personal and Spiritual Development 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. Staff will be encouraged to take part in on-demand PSHE training through our School Plus membership of the PSHE Association when registered.

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 / Deputy DSLs as per school protocol. In addition, all staff are made aware of their personal duty to report to the Police any suspicion that they might have of FGM potentially being planned (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, victimisation 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 in the Church of England's April 2025 document: 'Flourishing for all: Anti-Bullying Guidance for Church of England Schools.'

"No person is a problem, or an issue. People are made in the image of God. All of us, without exception, are loved and called in Christ. There are no 'problems', there are simply people... The way forward needs to be about love, joy and celebration of our humanity; of our creation in the image of God, of our belonging to Christ – all of us, without exception, without exclusion."

Children will be aware that some people seek sexual relationships with people of the same gender. 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 RSHE 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 of 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.

Statutory guidance sets out the rights of parents and carers to request the withdrawal of their child from some or all elements of sex education (but not relationships or health education) delivered as part of RSHE. This right applies up to three terms before a pupil

turns 16, after which pupils may request to receive sex education and the school has a duty to provide it. The right to withdraw does not apply to content delivered as part of the science curriculum, which includes human reproduction.

RSHE content is delivered through personal and spiritual development lessons, off-timetable enrichment or spirituality days, and may also arise naturally in other curriculum areas. Parents are informed annually via School Synergy when RSHE is taught and reminded of how to contact school should they wish to discuss or request withdrawal. Any parents contacting school regarding this are then typically invited to a meeting with the Curriculum Leader to review the content together, so that a discussion can take place regarding the benefits of participation alongside the potential impact of missing this learning. This is followed by a meeting with the Headteacher if parents still wish to proceed. While the school generally grants such requests, Governors strongly believe that a carefully planned and embedded RSHE programme plays a vital role in supporting every pupil's development and preparedness for life beyond 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 personal and spiritual development programme at St Michael's

At St Michael's, RSHE is taught primarily by the form tutor as part of our personal and spiritual development 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
- reflection tasks

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 personal and spiritual development lessons and on the school website. Pupils are also regularly made aware of the availability of our school nurse for any health concerns, as well as our Christian Youth Worker.

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.

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 Personal and Spiritual Development. Feedback is gathered from pupils through the use of pupil voice meetings, and issues raised through school council where appropriate. School also gathers data periodically through the use of online questionnaires.