



**St Cecilia's RC High School**

## **Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE)**

### **Model Secondary Policy - RSE**

**Date of policy: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026**

#### **Foreword**

Education is about more than academic achievement. Schools seek to prepare our young people for life in the world today. Their health and wellbeing and their relationships with others are vital components for living a fulfilled life and making a positive contribution to society. So, not surprisingly, Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) are an essential part of the overall school curriculum and the Government, through its Department for Education, regulates the content of those aspects of the curriculum.

Within the Catholic Church, we have a particular context in which we wish this education to be offered and specific views about certain elements of it. Consequently, on behalf of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, the Catholic Education Service (CES) offers advice and a model policy for how this area of the curriculum should be approached in Catholic schools. Our own Diocesan Department for Education has taken both the Government and the CES documents and brought them together into this model policy for use in schools within the Diocese of Salford. This ensures that Catholic teaching is set alongside the secular State requirements and will enable teachers to approach these often sensitive matters with confidence and clarity.

When it comes to Sex Education, parents do have a legal right to withdraw their children (except for those aspects required by the National Curriculum for Science). Hopefully such incidences would be few and far between, since we believe that it is much better for children to be educated about these matters in a safe and structured environment, where the content and message accord with our Catholic values, rather than learning about them from randomly accessed sources.

Thanks must go to the professionals (advisers and teachers) who have helped to prepare this policy for the benefit of our staff and our young people. May it help to enhance the quality of their lives.

**Rev Canon Michael Cooke VG**  
**Moderator of the Curia**

## Section 1- Contents and introduction

1. Introduction
2. Rationale
3. Definitions – Relationships and Sex Education
4. Parents and Carers – including right to be excused from Sex education
5. Consultation
6. A balanced curriculum
7. Controversial or sensitive issues; managing difficult questions; safeguarding

## Section 2 – What pupils will learn

8. What pupils will learn – Relationships and Sex Education
  - 8.1 Families
  - 8.2 Respectful relationships
  - 8.3 Online safety and awareness
  - 8.4 Being safe
  - 8.5 Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health
  - 8.6 The Law
9. What pupils will learn – Health Education
  - 9.1 Mental wellbeing
  - 9.2 Wellbeing online
  - 9.3 Physical health and fitness
  - 9.4 Healthy eating
  - 9.5 Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping
  - 9.6 Health protection and prevention and the healthcare system
  - 9.7 Personal safety
  - 9.8 Basic first aid
  - 9.9 Developing bodies

## Section 3 – Additional information

10. How RSE will be taught
11. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
12. Equalities obligations, including LGBT
13. Cross-curricular links
14. External visitors
15. Monitoring and evaluation
16. Governance
17. Date of policy and review

## SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

### 1. Introduction

1.1 Under the *Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017*, schools are required to teach:

- relationships education (all primary aged pupils)
- relationships and sex education (RSE) (all secondary aged pupils)
- health education (all pupils in state-funded schools only)

1.2 At St Cecilia's RC High School, as a Catholic school, we are guided by the Catholic Education Service who state that Catholic schools are required to deliver Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) in accordance with the teachings of the Church. We take this approach in conjunction with the guidance issued by the DfE.

### 2. Rationale

'I have come that you might have life and have it to the full.' (John.10.10)

2.1 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 RSHE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals.

2.2 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. RSHE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationship as it is there that sexuality grows and develops.

2.3 Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales and as advocated by the DfE (and the Welsh Assembly Government) RSHE 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.

2.4 All RSHE 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.

2.5 Our RSHE programme enshrines the 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.

2.6 We will endeavour to raise pupils' self-esteem, help them to grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of all persons and develop caring and sensitive attitudes. It is in this context that we commit ourselves in partnership with parents and carers, to provide children and young people with a 'positive and prudent sexual education' (Gravissimum Educationis) which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

By the end of KS4, we aim:

**to develop the following attitudes and virtues:**

1. reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility;
2. respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others;
3. joy in the goodness of the created world and their own bodily natures;
4. responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others;
5. recognising and valuing their own sexual identity and that of others;
6. celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love;
7. recognising the importance of marriage and family life;
8. fidelity in relationships.

**to develop the following personal and social skills:**

1. making sound judgements and good choices which have integrity, and which are respectful of the individual's commitments;
2. loving and being loved, and the ability to form friendships and loving, stable relationships free from exploitation, abuse and bullying;
3. managing emotions within relationships, and when relationships break down, with confidence, sensitivity and dignity;
4. managing conflict positively, recognising the value of difference;
5. cultivating humility, mercy and compassion, learning to forgive and be forgiven;
6. developing self-esteem and confidence, demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others;
7. 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;
8. being patient, delaying gratification and learning how to recognise the appropriate stages in the development of relationships, and how to love chastely;
9. assessing risks and managing behaviours in order to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity.

**to know and understand:**

1. the Church's teaching on relationships and the nature and meaning of sexual love;
2. the Church's teaching on marriage and the importance of marriage and family life;
3. the centrality and importance of virtue in guiding human living and loving;
4. the physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty;

5. the facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation;
6. 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;
7. how to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

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

3.1 As a Catholic school, we are guided by the DfE and CES. DfE guidance describes Relationships and Sex Education as follows:

‘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).”

3.2 In this we are guided by the Catholic Education Service, using their definition:

‘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.’

### **4. Parents And Carers – including the right to be excused from Sex education**

4.1 ‘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’.

4.2 ‘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.’

4.3 Therefore, we will work closely with parents/carers when planning and delivering our RSE programme and we will support parents and carers by sharing and providing materials where necessary.

4.4 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).

4.5 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.

4.6 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.

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

4.8 There is no right to withdraw from relationships and health education, nor from relevant science curriculum content.

## **5. Consultation**

5.1 Parents and carers will be consulted in developing and reviewing our policy and will be able to view the curriculum materials used to deliver RSHE. Information about how these materials can be accessed will be made available by the school.

5.2 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.

5.3 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.

## **6. A balanced curriculum**

6.1 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 RSHE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues.

6.2 Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE. See Section 8.6 of this policy.

6.3 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.

## **7. Controversial or sensitive issues; managing difficult questions; safeguarding**

7.1 There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSHE. These may be matters of maturity, of personal involvement or experience of children, of disagreement with the official teaching of the Church, of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious or harmful activity.

7.2 At St Cecilia's RC High School, we believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSHE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion.

7.3 At St Cecilia's RC High School, we want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSHE can take place. We will 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. We recognise that 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. Where a pupil withdrawn from sex education asks a question relating to that content, staff will respond sensitively, refer the matter to an appropriate senior member of staff and inform parents or carers where appropriate, subject to safeguarding considerations.

7.4 We recognise that pupils will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSHE takes place. Effective RSHE 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 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 will follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

## SECTION 2 – WHAT PUPILS WILL LEARN

### 8. What pupils will learn - Relationships and Sex Education

DfE guidance '*Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education*' details the requirements of Relationships and Education. Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required. In Salford diocesan primary schools sex education is guided by the Catholic Education Service model policy. In addition, by the end of secondary school pupils should know:

#### 8.1 Families

- That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children.
- Why marriage or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples. The legal status of marriage and civil partnership, including that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections that are not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have, for example, undergone a non-legally binding religious ceremony.
- That 'common-law marriage' is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children.
- That forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 are illegal.
- How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships.
- The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the importance of the early years of a child's life for brain development.
- How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed, including when pupils are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.

#### 8.2 Respectful relationships

- The characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, pupils should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, generosity, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships.
- How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers. Pupils should understand the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and equal.
- The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others. This includes developing one's own interests, hobbies, friendship groups, and skills. Pupils should understand what it means to be treated with respect by others.
- What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs.

- The practical steps pupils can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships. This includes skills for communicating respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict.
- The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.
- Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration.
- The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Pupils should understand that just because someone says yes to doing something, that doesn't automatically make it ethically ok.
- How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). Pupils should be equipped to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice.
- How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships. For example, how people who are disempowered can feel they are not entitled to be treated with respect by others or how those who enjoy an unequal amount of power might, with or without realising it, impose their preferences on others.
- How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviours and by disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing some people with a sense of sexual entitlement to the bodies of others.
- Pupils should have an opportunity to discuss how some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called "involuntary celibates" (incels) or online influencers.

### 8.3 Online safety and awareness

- Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.
- Online risks, including the importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect information online. Pupils should also understand the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues.
- The characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and / or may post things which aren't real / have been created with AI. That social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online.
- Not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal material which is sent to them. Pupils should understand that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has happened there is no way of controlling where it ends up. Pupils should understand the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images.
- That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI generated imagery. Pupils should understand the potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. Pupils should know how to seek support and should understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either at school or with the police, if an image of themselves has been shared. Pupils should also understand that sharing indecent images of people over 18 without consent is a crime.
- What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including personal information, images or videos, and how to manage issues online.
- About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them.
- That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons. Pupils should be taught where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Pupils should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong.
- That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice.
- How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns.
- That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours and can negatively affect how people behave towards sexual partners. This can affect pupils who see pornographic content

accidentally as well as those who see it deliberately. Pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it.

- That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (e.g. to enable targeted advertising).
- That criminals can operate online scams, for example using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion.
- That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and that these can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice. It is important to be able to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how they might pose a risk.

#### **8.4 Being safe**

- How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships (in all contexts, including online) and early sexual relationships that might involve kissing or touching. That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent.
- That there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from peers or others, including sexual pressure, and how to avoid putting pressure on others.
- How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe (and recognise this in the relationships of others); how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.
- How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. Pupils should learn ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. Pupils should understand that there are strategies they can use to increase their safety, and that this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour. Pupils might reflect on the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions.
- What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it.
- That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language / attention / touching, taking and/or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting.
- The concepts and laws relating to sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault.
- The concepts and laws relating to harmful sexual behaviour, which includes all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people but also includes other forms of concerning behaviour like using age-inappropriate sexual language.
- The concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour.

- That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed.
- The concepts and laws relating to harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation.
- The concepts and laws relating to forced marriage.
- The physical and emotional damage which can be caused by female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law around these areas. This should include that it is a criminal offence for anyone to perform or assist in the performance of FGM, virginity testing or hymenoplasty, in the UK or abroad, or to fail to protect a person under 16 for whom they are responsible.
- That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury. That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone's neck or covering someone's mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death.
- How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced from others, including information on where to report abuse, and where to seek medical attention when required, for example after an assault.

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

- That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive.
- The law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex.
- Sexual consent and their capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given, as well as the considerations that people might take into account prior to sexual activity, e.g. the law, faith and family values. That kindness and care for others require more than just consent.
- 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.
- That some sexual behaviours can be harmful.
- The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, and signposting towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decision making.
- That there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Pupils should be given medically and legally accurate and 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). The use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and how and where to access them. The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma.

- The prevalence of STIs, the short and long term impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
- How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour.
- How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms.
- How to counter misinformation, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further advice, and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

### **8.6 The law**

Pupils should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example, those relating to:

- marriage, including forced marriage and civil partnerships
- consent, including the age of consent
- domestic abuse, stalking, rape, sexual offences, female genital mutilation (FGM), 'virginity testing' and hymenoplasty
- sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation, including public sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour
- the Online Safety Act
- Online behaviours, including image and information sharing (including sexual imagery, youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc, and including AI-generated sexual imagery and deepfakes). Pupils should understand the law about online sexual harassment and online sexual abuse including grooming and sextortion
- Pornography
- Abortion
- protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation)
- alcohol, smoking, vaping and nicotine products and illicit drug use
- gambling
- carrying knives and weapons
- extremism/radicalization
- grooming or exploiting children into criminal activity, which can include gang involvement and county lines drug running
- hate crime
- the age of criminal responsibility
- medical consent, Gillick competence and parental responsibility

**As Relationships and sex education in this school is within CES guidance '*A Model Policy For Relationships And Sex Education*', by the end of secondary school, pupils will have developed the attitudes, virtues, skills, knowledge and understanding listed in Section 2 of this policy.**

## **9. What pupils will learn- Heath Education**

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:

### **9.1 Mental wellbeing**

- How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.
- The benefits and importance of physical activity, sleep, time outdoors, community participation and volunteering or acts of kindness for mental wellbeing and happiness
- That happiness is linked to being connected to others. Pupils should be supported to understand what makes them feel happy and what makes them feel unhappy, while recognising that loneliness can be for most people an inevitable part of life at times and is not something of which to be ashamed.
- That worrying and feeling down are normal, can affect everyone at different times and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition, and that managing those feelings can be helped by seeing them as normal.
- Characteristics of common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression), including carefully-presented factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental health conditions. This should not be discussed in a way that encourages normal feelings to be labelled as mental health condition.
- How to critically evaluate which activities will contribute to their overall wellbeing.
- Understanding how to overcome anxiety or other barriers to participating in fun, enjoyable or rewarding activities – that it's possible to overcome those barriers using coping strategies, and that finding the courage to participate in activities which initially feel challenging may decrease anxiety over time rather than increasing it.
- That gambling can lead to serious mental health harms, including anxiety, depression, and suicide, and that some gambling products are more likely to cause these harms than others.
- That the co-occurrence of alcohol/drug use and poor mental health is common and that the relationship is bi-directional: mental health problems can increase the risk of alcohol/drug use, and alcohol/drug use can trigger mental health problems or exacerbate existing ones. That stopping smoking can improve people's mental health and decrease anxiety.

### **9.2 Wellbeing online**

- About the benefits of limiting time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing.
- 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; the impact that an over-reliance on online relationships, including relationships formed through social media, can have.

- 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.
- The risks related to online gambling and gambling-like content within gaming, including the accumulation of debt
- How advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online, understanding the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation online, including conspiracy theories.
- The risks of illegal behaviours online, including drug and knife supply or the sale or purchasing of illicit drugs online.
- The serious risks of viewing online content that promotes self-harm, suicide or violence, including how to safely report this material and how to access support after viewing it.

### **9.3 Physical health and fitness**

- The characteristics of a healthy lifestyle, including physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill-health, including cardiovascular ill-health.
- Factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious health conditions.
- That physical activity can promote wellbeing and combat stress.
- The science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.

### **9.4 Healthy eating**

- How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay, unhealthy weight gain, and cardiovascular disease.
- The risks of unhealthy weight gain, including increased risks of cancer, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
- The impacts of alcohol on diet and unhealthy weight gain.

### **9.5 Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping**

- The facts about which drugs are illegal, the risks of taking illegal drugs, including the increased risk of potent synthetic drugs being added to illegal drugs, the risks of illicit vapes containing drugs, illicit drugs and counterfeit medicines, and the potential health harms, including the link to poor mental health.
- The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.
- The physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption. What constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood, and the legal age of sale for alcohol in England. Understanding how to increase personal safety while drinking alcohol, including how to decrease the risks of having a drink spiked or of poisoning from potentially fatal substances such as methanol.
- The physical and psychological consequences of problem-use of alcohol, including alcohol dependency.
- The dangers of the misuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medicines.

- The facts about the multiple serious harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer and cardiovascular disease), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.
- The facts about vaping, including the harms posed to young people, and the role that vapes can play in helping adult smokers to quit.

## **9.6 Health protection and prevention, and understanding the healthcare system**

- Personal hygiene, germs and how they are spread, including bacteria and viruses, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics.
- Dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene, including brushing teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and cleaning between teeth, reducing consumption of sugar-containing food and drinks, and regular check-ups at the dentist.
- How and when to self-care for minor ailments, and the role of pharmacists as knowledgeable healthcare professionals.
- The importance of taking responsibility for their own health, and the benefits of regular self-examination and screening.
- The facts and scientific evidence relating to vaccination, immunisation and antimicrobial resistance. The introduction of topics relating to vaccination and immunisation should be aligned with when vaccinations are offered to pupils.
- The importance of sufficient good-quality sleep for good health, the importance of screen-free time before bed and removing phones from the bedroom, and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.
- The importance of healthy behaviours before and during pregnancy, including the importance of pre-conception health, including taking folic acid. The importance of pelvic floor health. Information on miscarriage and pregnancy loss, and how to access care and support.
- How to navigate their local healthcare system: what a GP is; when to use A&E / minor injuries; accessing sexual health and family planning clinics; the role of local pharmacies; and how to seek help via local third sector partners which may have specialist services.
- The concept of Gillick competence. That the legal age of medical consent is 16. That before this, a child's parents will have responsibility for consenting to medical treatment on their behalf unless they are Gillick competent to take this decision for themselves. Pupils should understand the circumstances in which someone over 16 may not be deemed to have capacity to make decisions about medical treatment.

## **9.7 Personal Safety**

- How to identify risk and manage personal safety in increasingly independent situations, including around roads, railways – including level crossings - and water (including the water safety code), and in unfamiliar social or work settings (for example the first time a young person goes on holiday without their parents).
- How to recognise and manage peer influence in relation to risk-taking behaviour and personal safety, including peer influence online and on social media.
- How to develop key social and emotional skills that will increase pupils' safety from involvement in conflict and violence. These include skills to support self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making, as well as skills to recognise and manage peer pressure.

- Understanding which trusted adults they can talk to if pupils are worried about violence and/or knife crime.
- The law as it relates to knives and violence. Content and examples should relate to the local context and avoid using fear as an educational tool. Children should be taught that carrying weapons is uncommon, and should not be scared into the perception that many young people are carrying knives (which can lead to the misconception that they need to carry a knife too).
- The risks and signs that they may be at risk of grooming or exploitation, and how to seek help where there is a concern.

## 9.8 Basic First Aid

- Basic treatment for common injuries and ailments.
- Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR.
- The purpose of defibrillators, when one might be needed and who can use them.

## 9.9 Developing bodies

- The main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.
- The facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body, including brain development.
- About menstrual and gynaecological health, including: what is an average period; period problems such as premenstrual syndrome; heavy menstrual bleeding; endometriosis; and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). When to seek help from healthcare professionals.
- The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and menopause, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.

## SECTION 3 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### 10. How RSE will be taught

10.1 RSE forms one part of the personal development of pupils at St Cecilia's RC High School.

10.2 Through teaching RSE at St Cecilia's RC High School we endeavour to raise pupils' self-esteem, help them grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of all persons and develop caring and sensitive attitudes.

10.3 DfE guidance on RSE is statutory, but schools are free to determine how to deliver it's content. At St Cecilia's RC High School we have chosen to use the **"Life to the Full Secondary Programme from Ten Ten Resources"** which are within Salford Diocese recommendations. These resources fit into our broad and balanced curriculum. It is a graduated, age-appropriate programme and when using it, we take into account the developmental differences of our pupils.

10.4 Our Curriculum Map on the school website shows our carefully sequenced planned programme of lessons. This is available via the St Cecilia's PSHE and RSHE webpage:

<https://st-cecilias.co.uk/curriculum/pshe-rshe>

10.5 Our RSHE programme is delivered to pupils by teachers and support staff.

## **11. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)**

11.1 At St Cecilia's RC High School, we ensure that Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education is accessible for all pupils. High quality teaching, that is differentiated and personalised where necessary, is the starting point to ensure this.

11.2 Through careful planning and delivery, we ensure that Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to their different abilities, levels of maturity and developmental stages. We are also sensitive to pupils' personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, faith or culture and we teach our programmes in a way that ensure that pupils are not subject to discrimination.

11.3 Our programmes of study will also be delivered with reference to the law, in particular to the Equality Act (see point 12).

11.4 We are aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. We recognise that Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education can also be particularly important subject for some pupils; for example those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities. As such, at St Cecilia's RC High School we take into consideration all these factors when designing and teaching these subjects.

11.5 We are mindful of the preparing for adulthood outcomes as set out in the SEND code of practice when teaching Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education.

## **12. Equalities Obligations, including LGBT**

12.1 At St Cecilia's RC High School we will not discriminate against pupils in relation to the following as it is unlawful:

- admissions (apart from the exemptions on single sex schools and those with a religious character)
- the provision of education
- access to any benefit, facility or service
- exclusions
- any other detriment

Unlawful discrimination includes:

- direct discrimination (including discrimination based on perception or association)
- indirect discrimination
- discrimination arising from disability
- failure to make reasonable adjustments

- pregnancy and maternity discrimination

12.2 At St Cecilia's RC High School 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).

### **12.3 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)**

12.3.1 In teaching RSE, we ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. In particular, complying with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics – (Section 12.1).

12.3.2 At St Cecilia's RC High School we ensure that all our teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content. When we teach pupils about LGBT (Section 8.2), we ensure that the content is fully integrated into programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson.

12.4 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.

12.5 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).

12.6 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.

12.7 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.

12.8 At St Cecilia's RC High School through our programmes of study, we enable pupils to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including online), use of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help.

## **13. Cross-Curricular Links**

13.1 This policy is delivered as part of our PSHE framework and is compatible with our school's other policy documents including our Behaviour Policy and our Safeguarding Policy.

13.2 It also complements several national curriculum subjects and we look for opportunities to draw links between the subjects and integrate teaching where appropriate. For example:

- The National Curriculum for Science also includes subject content in related areas, such as the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals. We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSHE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science.
- The National Curriculum for Computing aims to ensure that all pupils can understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of computer science, including logic, algorithms and data representation. It also covers e-safety, with progression in the content to reflect the different and escalating risks that young people face as they get older. This includes how to use technology safely, responsibly, respectfully and securely, how to keep personal information private, and where to go for help and support.
- The National Curriculum for PE aims to ensure that pupils develop competence to excel in a broad range of physical activities, are physically active for sustained periods of time, engage in a competitive sport and activities and lead healthy, active lives.

13.3 We also ensure that our RSHE programmes complement our whole school approaches to wellbeing and health for example Kooth workshops, Compass Bloom and more.

#### **14. External visitors**

14.1 Our school will often call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSHE. These visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher led sessions.

14.2 External visitors will be clear about their role and responsibilities whilst they are in school delivering a session.

14.3 Any visitor delivering aspects of the RSHE curriculum must adhere to our code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Checklist for External Speakers to Schools (see appendix 1).

14.4 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.

## **15. Monitoring and evaluation**

15.1 Our RSE Leader is Mr Robert Duffy. They work alongside the senior leadership team to monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme. This includes examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils work at regular intervals.

15.2 Curricular development is linked to our self-evaluation, school improvement planning and performance management cycles.

15.3 The programme is evaluated with pupils, staff and parents/carers. The results of evaluations are reported to these groups of interested parties and their suggestions are sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

## **16. Governance**

16.1 Our link governor for RSHE is Liz Hindley.

16.2 As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, our governing body will also make sure that:

- provision is in accordance with other whole school policies, the ethos of our school and our Christian beliefs
- all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes
- the subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned
- the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND
- clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn
- the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

## **17. Date of policy and review**

17.1 Date of policy: **1<sup>st</sup> September 2026**

17.2 This policy is available to parents/carers and anyone who asks for it free of charge from our office and is also published on our website.

17.3 This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years.

\*Documents used to help create/ review this policy include and are not limited to:

- Equality Act 2010
- RSE and Health Education Statutory Guidance (DfE)
- Relationships and Sex Education CES model Framework Policy (Revised 2026)



## CHECKLIST FOR EXTERNAL SPEAKERS / ORGANISATIONS INVITED TO SCHOOLS

In this checklist **'School(s)'** means all Catholic school(s). For the avoidance of doubt this includes:

- Catholic voluntary aided schools;
- Catholic independent schools (including Catholic academies);
- Catholic sixth form colleges; and
- Catholic non-maintained special schools.<sup>1</sup>

As an integral part of its educational vision for the holistic formation of children and young people, the Catholic Church expects Catholic schools to promote and uphold high standards throughout their activities and this includes visits from external speakers.

All external speakers invited to schools should be of the highest quality and school leaders are responsible for ensuring that they have enough information about the content to be delivered by any external speaker to enable them to determine whether the content will be pitched at the right level for the age and level of maturity of the children and young people to whom the external speakers will present. All schools should have clear policies for the booking of external speakers which includes sign-off of the booking at an appropriately senior level and compliance with safeguarding checks.

Schools should also be mindful of the DfE guidance on "political impartiality in schools" which can be found by following this link:

[Political impartiality in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/political-impartiality-in-schools)

This checklist should be completed *prior* to welcoming (and establishing collaborative relationships with) external speakers (and any organisation they represent) to ensure that the Catholic character of your school is preserved and developed in the external speaker's communications with pupils and parents and carers.

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<sup>1</sup> For the avoidance of doubt, the CES advises that the DfE guidance and this checklist should be followed by all of the specified educational settings listed above. This is the case, even where the DfE guidance does not apply to the setting type.

| Name of Speaker                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                         |                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Question                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Answer                                                                                                  | Actions needed/Comment |
| 1. Will the Speaker be supervised at all times during their visit?<br><br>If not, why not?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | yes <input type="checkbox"/><br>no <input type="checkbox"/><br>further comment <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| 2. Have you carried out safeguarding checks (if appropriate) for the Speaker and have these been recorded in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | yes <input type="checkbox"/><br>no <input type="checkbox"/><br>further comment <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| 3. Has the Speaker understood and confirmed that their communications in the school will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be respectful towards Catholic teachings;</li> <li>• not be prejudicial or detrimental to the Catholic character of the school;</li> <li>• not engage pupils in political activity;</li> <li>• not cover certain partisan political views which are not deemed relevant or appropriate (provide details if applicable);</li> <li>• be delivered in accordance with the requirements set out in the DfE's guidance on political impartiality in schools (if appropriate).</li> </ul> | yes <input type="checkbox"/><br>no <input type="checkbox"/><br>further comment <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| 4. Have you reviewed the resources/materials that will be used by the Speaker?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | yes <input type="checkbox"/><br>no <input type="checkbox"/><br>further comment <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| 5. Have you reviewed other resources produced by the Speaker (and by any organisation the speaker represents) even if they will not form part of the speaker's activities at the school?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | yes <input type="checkbox"/><br>no <input type="checkbox"/><br>further comment <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| 6. Have you conducted a general internet search using the Speaker's name (e.g. a google search)? If parents or children and young people conducted a similar search are any concerns likely to arise?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | yes <input type="checkbox"/><br>no <input type="checkbox"/><br>further comment <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| 7. Can you confirm that the political views espoused by the speaker/speaker's organisation are in compliance with British values and                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | yes <input type="checkbox"/><br>no <input type="checkbox"/><br>further comment <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |

|                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                         |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| do not involve taking an extreme political position?                                                                                                |                                                                                                         |  |
| 8. Have school policies and procedures applicable to the speaker been explained to and understood by the Speaker?                                   | yes <input type="checkbox"/><br>no <input type="checkbox"/><br>further comment <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| 9. Are there any other outstanding issues or concerns with the Speaker and/or their suitability?                                                    | yes <input type="checkbox"/><br>no <input type="checkbox"/><br>further comment <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| 10. Will the Speaker deliver content of a high quality that is appropriate to the age and maturity of the children or young people in the audience? | yes <input type="checkbox"/><br>no <input type="checkbox"/><br>further comment <input type="checkbox"/> |  |

**If you have any concerns regarding the suitability of this Speaker, you should contact your Diocese to seek further clarification.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
 Position \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dated \_\_\_\_\_

Approved for booking  
 Senior Staff member Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Position \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dated \_\_\_\_\_