



The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools



Relationships, Sex & Health Education Policy

Scope:	St Elphege's & Regina Coeli Catholic Schools		Responsibility
Date Adopted:	2019		SFCAT
This Review:	Spring 2026		Review Cycle
Next Review:	Spring 2029		3 years
Approved:	EHT:		Policy Owner
			HT
			Audience
			<i>All stakeholders</i>



The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools



'With God all things are possible'

'Where there is love, there is God'

St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will give every child the best possible education because each individual is uniquely created and precious to God. As a Catholic community, guided by the Holy Spirit, we will follow the example of Jesus Christ in all aspects of daily life.

With the help of God's love, St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will seek to develop the whole child. Each child is uniquely created and precious to God and it is the schools' mission, guided by the Holy Spirit, to nurture each child's spiritual, moral and academic growth.

Inspired by the teachings of Christ we will...

- Develop our children's faith, spirituality and joy in the love of God
- Educate our children to the highest standards thus realising their own potential
- Instil in our children the knowledge, skills and confidence to succeed and take pride in their achievements recognising we each have special gifts and talents
- Encourage everyone to be more than they thought possible, in a secure and loving environment
- Promote a caring community where we will all behave well. We will be dignified in our actions, demonstrating good manners, tolerance, kindness and generosity to ourselves and others
- Prepare our children today to become tomorrow's responsible and independent individuals equipped to face life's challenges
- Ensure our Federation is a happy, safe and welcoming place where we all enjoy learning, work hard, support one another and do our best
- Create an active partnership of love, joy and high expectations between children, parents, carers, staff, governors, parishes and the wider community

Inclusion statement

The school community will ensure that ALL children irrespective of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender (including those who identify as transgender), sexual orientation, ability, special educational need, disability, faith or religion, age, culture, socio-economic or home background will have equal access to the breadth of this policy.

The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter and the school will endeavour to promote their individuality. Children with learning disabilities and gifted and talented children will be allowed to express themselves according to their ability. Work will be differentiated to meet their needs and achievements will be celebrated.

This Policy will be implemented through on going consultation with all members of the school community and developments in law or statutory guidance.

In line with DfE guidance, the schools teach the facts and the law regarding biological sex and gender reassignment in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner. We do not teach the concept of ‘gender identity’—the idea that everyone has an internal gender separate from their biological sex—as an undisputed fact. Teachers will maintain a neutral approach to contested theories, ensuring all pupils are treated with the dignity and respect befitting their status as children of God, as outlined in our Mission Statement.

Introduction

This policy has been developed by following the guidance given by the Archdiocese of Southwark on the creation of Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policies. All policies and guidance are reviewed on a three-yearly cycle or earlier if necessary.

“The Second Vatican Council spoke of the need for “a positive and prudent sex education” to be imparted to children and adolescents “as they grow older,” with “due weight being given to the advances in the psychological, pedagogical and didactic sciences.” ... It can only be seen within the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving.”¹

In our schools, any teaching or formation on human love and human development must be within the whole context of our faith in God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ, as it is through our love of God and of our neighbour that we reciprocate God’s love for mankind. As the term ‘Relationships, Sex and Education’ (RSHE) indicates, the emphasis is placed on the understanding and formation of respectful, loving relationships which exist between friends and within families.

Marriage is one such loving relationship. The Church’s sacramental understanding of marriage explains how we can meet Christ through the adventure of learning to love one another. Pope Francis tells us that, *“Christian marriage is a sign of how much Christ loved his Church in the covenant sealed on the cross, yet it also makes that love present in the communion of spouses”²*. He then explains that, *“the sacrament of marriage flows from the incarnation and the paschal mystery, whereby God showed the fullness of his love for humanity by becoming one with us.”³*

Marriage is a mutual commitment of total fidelity which is open to the gift of life. Understanding how relationships work and developing relationship skills gives a context for understanding human sexuality and sexual health. This is consistent with the Church’s view that the purpose of RSHE is to secure *“an adequate knowledge of the nature and importance of sexuality and of the harmonious and integral development of the person towards psychological maturity, with full spiritual maturity in view, to which all believers are called.”⁴*

The guidance states that the focus in primary school should be on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults. To support this, children will also explore the objectives of the curriculum through the Mission Statement and FAITH values (Family, Aspiration, Inclusiveness, Tolerance and Harmony).

1. Legal requirements

As of September 2020, it is expected that all schools in England will meet the requirements set out by the Department of Education in '*The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education*'.

As of July 2025, this policy also reflects the updated statutory requirements for Relationships, Sex and Health Education. While schools are encouraged to adopt these changes immediately, they become compulsory as of 1st September 2026. This includes expanded focus on personal safety, digital risks including Artificial Intelligence (AI), and enhanced parental transparency regarding curriculum materials.

We meet these requirements through:

- Teaching the Sex Education and Health Education elements of the National Curriculum for Science.
- Teaching the compulsory Relationships Education.
- Allowing parents their right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex education provided, but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction as required by the National Curriculum Science Order.
- Providing an up to date RSHE policy, which is made available to parents and others both on the schools' websites and printed should they wish to receive a copy.
- Teaching personal safety across the curriculum
- Teaching digital risks through the computing and e-safety curriculum

2. Roles

2.1 Parents

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.

*"Sex education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must always be carried out under their attentive guidance, whether at home or in educational centres chosen and controlled by them. In this regard, the Church reaffirms the law of subsidiarity, which the school is bound to observe when it cooperates in sex education, by entering into the same spirit that animates the parents"*⁷.

The Church and our Schools, recognise that parents are the first teachers of their children. It is their right and responsibility to inform and educate their children in matters relating to human relationships and sexual development. Parents are given the opportunity to watch videos, see documents and discuss the content of RSHE that will be delivered and resources that are planned to be used. This is facilitated through curriculum meetings and information sessions for parents in Years 4, 5 & 6.

The schools recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children. In accordance with the 2025 statutory guidance, parents have a legal right to view all RSHE curriculum materials and resources. The school ensures full parental transparency. While the school will proactively consult with parents during policy reviews, the final decision on

curriculum content remains with the Trust to ensure it meets statutory requirements and remains faithful to the Catholic character of our schools.

2.2 Governors

The 1996 Education Act places responsibility for the schools' policy on RSHE in the hands of the Governing Body. They are required to ensure that an up to date RSHE policy is available for parents to read and that the policy is consistent with other relevant whole school policies (e.g. RE; SEND; Safeguarding; Anti-Bullying; PSHE). Foundation Governors are appointed by the Archbishop to promote and safeguard the Catholic character of the school. They have a particular responsibility to ensure that the RSHE policy for the school complies with Diocesan policy, directives, and guidance regarding RSHE.

2.3 Head Teachers

The implementation of the RSHE policy is the responsibility of the Head Teacher, in liaison with the governors, parents, Trust, Diocesan Education Commission and the Local Authority.

The Head Teacher ensures that the programme is integrated into the curriculum, and that teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated, through the schools' usual monitoring programme.

2.4 RSHE Leaders

Members of the SLT, PSHE and RE Leads work in conjunction to oversee the RSHE curriculum planning, training and support for teachers. With the Governors and Head Teacher, the RSHE Leaders ensure that there is a planned process of informing parents about RSHE in the school.

2.5 Teachers and Other Adults

Relationships, Sex and Health Education is the responsibility of all staff as they are involved in developing the personal and social skills that contribute to human flourishing.

Additionally, staff work together, across Year Groups and Phases, to plan a developmental curriculum, which blends teaching and learning across several curriculum areas: RE (the Come and See Programme); PSHE; Computing and Science. In addition, elements of relationships education are taught through the discussion of characters and their actions when sharing class novels/poems/films or reading texts in English, through the imagery seen in art or music lessons and through drama/dance work.

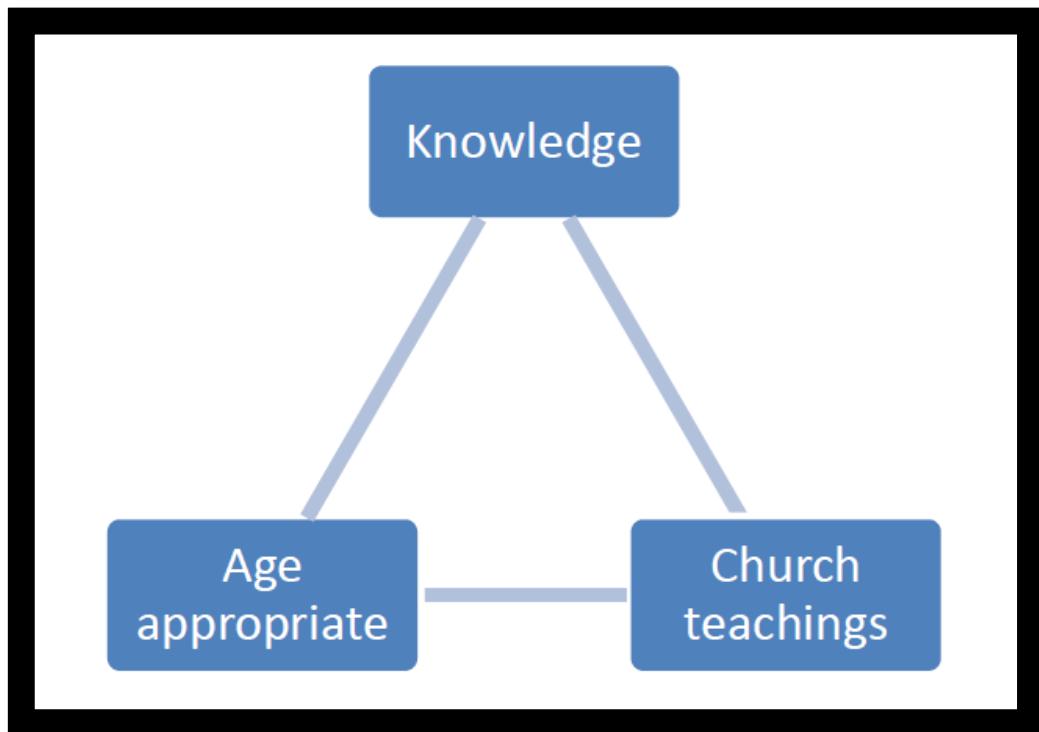
As well as delivering curriculum content in the classroom, staff are also role models around the school, giving examples of conflict resolution and establishing relationships of mutual respect and trust. All staff have a responsibility of care and safeguarding of pupils. They should actively contribute to guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual wellbeing of their pupils and apply the policies of the school consistently. This work is in line with the schools' Catholic ethos and current legislation.

The Aim of Relationships, Sex and Health Education in Catholic Schools

“Sex education should provide information while keeping in mind that children and young people have not yet attained full maturity. The information has to come at a proper time and in a way suited to their age.”⁸

To provide children and young people with a “*positive and prudent sexual education*”⁹ which is compatible with their physical and psychological maturity. RSHE in our schools is designed around three cornerstone principles, namely that:

- 2.5.1 Pupils need clear, accurate and sound knowledge
- 2.5.2 Church teachings are presented in a forthright and clear manner, using the specific references provided by the Church
- 2.5.3 In presentation of both knowledge and Church teachings, age appropriateness and the awareness of child development is key. Instruction should match the child’s developmental level and, as with all learning, be aware of individual differences.



3. The Objectives of Relationships and Sex Education in Catholic Schools

- To provide children and young people with a knowledge and understanding of the Church's teaching on relationships and sexual love.
- To provide children and young people with a positive understanding of what constitutes good, loving relationships.
- To provide children and young people with a knowledge and understanding of the biological facts about human reproduction.
- To provide children and young people with the skills and confidence to defend themselves against unwanted pressures and to keep them safe.
- To provide pupils with the knowledge and practical skills to recognise and manage risks in the physical world, specifically regarding road safety, rail safety (including level crossings), water safety (the Water Safety Code), and fire safety.

4. Choosing and using resources, working with external speakers

Relationships, Sex and Health Education is taught in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church. It is the responsibility of the Governing Body, working with the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team, to ensure that this is achieved through careful monitoring of the teaching resources used. In considering the resources which will be used for RSHE, governors take into account:

- The need to support parents and carers by providing education which is faithful to the teachings of the Church and appropriate for the ages and stages of development of the pupils;
- The extent to which specific materials can be used to illustrate the beauty of the human being created by God;
- The values implied by specific resources and the way in which they may be used to enhance pupils' understanding of human development and Catholic teaching;
- The accuracy and clarity of material presented.

The Federation has adopted the scheme 'Life to the Full' from Ten: Ten Resources to fulfil its obligations in teaching children Relationships Sex and Health Education. The scheme, 'Life to the Full' is endorsed by the diocese.

The programme structure follows 3 Modules:

EYFS	Module 1 Created and Loved by God	Module 2 Created to Love Others	Module 3 Created to Live in the Community
Key Stage one	Units: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Religious Understanding• Me, My Body, My Health• Emotional Wellbeing• Life Cycles	Units: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Religious Understanding• Personal; Relationships• Keeping Safe	Units <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Religious Understanding• Living in the Wider World
Lower Key Stage two			
Upper Key Stage two			

Modules are age appropriate for each year Group and phase. Each module begins with ‘Religious Understanding’ to ensure pupils can anchor their learning to the teachings of Christ. The use of prayer and prayer through song is implemented in all sessions.

Ten:Ten Resources also provide an online Parent Portal. This gives the parents an opportunity to view the materials being shared with their children and discuss topics with them to support and consolidate learning.

It is important that any external visitor to the school is also clear about their role and responsibility while they are in a school. Such visits (eg, by the School Nurse, midwife, parent and baby) should complement the schools’ programme, ‘Life to the Full’. Visitors are always accompanied by class teachers who would give guidance to ensure that sessions delivered by a visitor are respectful of the teaching of the Catholic Church. Further guidance on working with external visitors can be found in the Education Commission’s document: *‘Guidance on visitors and external speakers working with pupils in Catholic schools in the Diocese.’*¹⁰ This is available on the following website and should be consulted before inviting external agencies or visitors into the school: www.rcaoseducation.org.uk .

5. End of primary school knowledge expectations

Families and people who care for me	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability.• the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other’s lives.• that others’ families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children’s families are also characterised by love and care.• that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children’s security as they grow up.• that marriage¹⁷ represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.• how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.
Caring friendships	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.• the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties.• that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded.• that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.
Respectful relationships	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs. • practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships. • the conventions of courtesy and manners. • the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. • that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority. • about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help. • what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive. • the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.
Online relationships	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not. • that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous. • the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them. • how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. • how information and data is shared and used online. • how to recognise and respond to AI-generated content (deepfakes) and the risks of 'fake intimacy' from online chatbots. • the risks associated with online financial harm, including scams, 'loot boxes' in gaming, and age-inappropriate gambling-like behaviours.

Being safe	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context). • about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe. • that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact. • how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know. • how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult. • how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard. • how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so. • where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.
Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical skills for emotional regulation, including how to manage feelings of disappointment, frustration, and hurt. • An understanding of grief, loss, and bereavement."

6. Early Years Foundation Stage

For our Nursery and EYFS pupils, RSHE is integrated into the 'Personal, Social and Emotional Development' (PSED) prime area of the EYFS Framework. The focus is on building self-confidence, managing feelings, and developing respectful relationships. As a safeguarding measure, and in line with DfE best practice, children are taught the correct names for body parts to ensure they have the vocabulary and confidence to report any concerns to a trusted adult.

Guidance

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 document states the new requirements by the DfE for primary schools from September 2020. The guidance is to be read in conjunction with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)
- Equality Act 2010 and schools
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance)

Appendix

The appendix lists the statutory requirements for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) in England as at July 2025

Section 34 of the **Children and Social Work Act 2017** provides for relationships and sex education to be taught in all schools in England.

The changes involve:

- All primary schools in England teaching ‘Relationships Education’
- All secondary schools teaching ‘Relationships and Sex Education’
- Reformed statutory guidance, following consultation
- Retaining the parental right of withdrawal from sex education, with new rights for children to ‘opt-in’ as they approach age 16
- Flexibility for schools in their approach, including for faith schools to teach within the tenets of their faith

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 confirm that these changes came into force in September 2020. Statutory health education in schools is being brought in as part of these changes.

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (published July 2025, for compulsory implementation from 1st September 2026)."

The disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic means that, while the legal provisions came into force on 1 September 2020, schools may delay their introduction of the new requirements until summer 2021 if they are not ready to begin teaching the revised subjects in

Following the passage of the **Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013** the Government stated that schools should encourage pupils to respect other people, even if they do not agree with them. The then Equalities Minister stated that teachers would be able to describe their belief that marriage is between a man and a woman, while acknowledging that same-sex marriage will be available within the law.

References

1. Libreria Editrice Vatican Amoris Laetitia: The Joy of Love (19th March 2016) paragraph 280 with reference to Vatican 2, Gravissimum Educationis (28th October 1965)
2. Libreria Editrice Vatican Amoris Laetitia: The Joy of Love (19th March 2016) paragraph 73
3. Libreria Editrice Vatican Amoris Laetitia: The Joy of Love (19th March 2016) paragraph 74
4. The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, Educational Guidance in Human Love (1st November, 1983) paragraph 34
5. DfE Sex and Relationship Education Guidance 0116/2000 paragraph 9, page 5. (July 2000)
6. Sex and Relationships Guidance, 0116/2000, Department for Education & Employment, July 2000
7. Pontifical Council for the Family, The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality, paragraph 43, (1995)
8. Libreria Editrice Vatican Amoris Laetitia: The Joy of Love (19th March 2016) paragraph 281
9. Gravissimum Educationis 1
10. Guidance on visitors and external speakers working with pupils in Catholic schools in the Diocese, Education Commission, September 2015
11. Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, 0116/2000, Department for Education and Employment, July 2000
12. Some schools/documents refer to Personal Social Health Economic Education (PSHEE)
13. Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency, The Secondary Curriculum, 18 November, 2010
14. Department of Health, National Healthy Schools Status: A Guide for Schools, (London: Department of health, 2005)
15. Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency, End of Key Stage Statements for PSHE, 19 November 2010)
16. Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, 0116/2000, Department for Education and Employment, July 2000
17. Marriage in England and Wales is available to both opposite sex and same sex couples. The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 extended marriage to same sex couples in England and Wales. The ceremony through which a couple get married may be civil or religious.

Appendix 1

St Elphege's and Regina Coeli *RSE Parent Consultation March 2021* *Frequently Asked Questions*

1. Does the programme contain LGBT content?

Many parents are keen to know if the programme contains LGBT content and what that is. Here's a brief summary of our approach:

- Life to the Full is inclusive of all children, families and teaching staff;
- From the very start, the programme acknowledges that families are made up differently (including single-parent families, blended families, step-parents, carers, etc) and it celebrates the family unit in whatever form it takes;
- Individual schools can build on this teaching, depending on the cohort, to ensure that every child is assured, and their family background is affirmed;
- In Upper Key Stage Two, the presenters on film say that some children have “two mums and two dads” as part of a list of different family set-ups - this is the only explicit reference to same-sex relationships in the programme;
- The programme does not explicitly refer to transgenderism;
- The programme emphasises very strongly the dignity of every person as being created and loved by God - it examines difference and bullying, but does not explicitly highlight LGBT people within this context, which is a decision for the local school to make;
- The only reference to sexual intimacy is in the optional Upper Key Stage Two session ‘Making Babies: Part 2’. In this session, sexual intimacy is discussed within the context of a heterosexual, Christian marriage.

This teaching is in line with the statutory guidance from the Department for Education.

2. Can I withdraw my child from the lessons?

In primary schools, the new statutory curriculum is called Relationships and Health Education. Parents do not have the right to remove their children from Relationships Education or Health Education lessons. However, some primary schools may also choose to teach aspects of ‘Sex Education’, which means teaching about sexual intimacy. Parents retain the right to withdraw children from ‘Sex Education’ lessons in primary schools, but not that taught as part of the Science curriculum.

3. Will parents be informed prior to lessons being taught?

Parents will receive the RSE scheme of work for their child’s year group. We will endeavour to share our timetable with parents to support the programme at home.

4. I am worried that the education around sexual intimacy at Year 6 is maybe too early.

As mentioned in question 2, parents have the option to withdraw their children from specific lessons that teach sexual intimacy.

It is important to keep in mind that children who do not attend these lessons become curious to what other children have been learning in their absence. Children explaining to other children in the playground or on the way home cannot be monitored.

5. Will my child learn about sex in Year 1?

No. Sexual intimacy is only taught in one lesson in Year 6. This lesson is optional and parents can exclude their child from these sessions.

6. Is Year 4 too early to be teaching about puberty and changes in the human body?

Puberty will be taught in Year 4 at the earliest. The Senior Leadership Team are currently taking parents', diocesan and school views into account and will inform parents of a decision before any lessons focussing on puberty are taught.

7. What is being done to tailor the programme for children with Special Educational Needs?

The Life to the Full scheme of work has differentiated activities for children who may need to learn about certain aspects in a different way to their peers. Teachers will inform and work alongside the parents of particular children to ensure the programme meets the needs of all pupils.

8. Will boys and girls be in the same sessions?

In any taught sessions that fall under the category of 'Sex Education', children will be split into boy and girl groups. These sessions will also be led by teachers of the same sex as the children i.e. male staff will lead the sessions for boys and female staff will lead the sessions for girls.

This approach has been used in Year 6 for many years and is very effective. Children feel less worried talking about this content when in single-sex groups.

Updates from July 2025 Guidance

9. Why are children being taught about road, rail, and water safety in RSHE?

The July 2025 guidance introduced a new "Personal Safety" strand. We teach children to recognise and manage risks in the physical world, including the "Water Safety Code," rail safety (specifically level crossings), and fire safety, to ensure they can navigate their environment safely.

10. How does the school address modern digital risks like Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

As part of our updated Online Safety curriculum, we teach children how to identify AI-generated content (deepfakes) and the risks of "fake intimacy" with chatbots. We also cover online financial harm, such as scams and "loot boxes" in gaming, to protect children in an increasingly digital world.

11. Does the school teach about "Gender Identity"?

In line with the 2025 DfE guidance, we do not teach the concept of "gender identity" as an undisputed fact. We focus on the biological facts of sex and the law regarding gender reassignment. Our approach is one of neutrality and respect, ensuring all pupils are treated with dignity as children of God, without endorsing contested social theories.