

St Mary & St Michael's Catholic Primary School



Human Relationship & Sex Education Policy

By Living our Values- We Shine!

“At St Mary & St Michael’s we welcome all.

- ♥ We accept and celebrate uniqueness through love, care and compassion, serving all God’s family.
- ♥ We respect each other and our aspirations.
- ♥ We nurture our faith and have the courage to forgive.
- ♥ We give everyone the opportunity to shine by working together in the warmth of our school community.
- ♥ We create a love for learning to allow us to achieve our dreams.”

1. Vision and Mission

At St Mary & St Michael's, we are guided by God who is at the centre of everything we do. We support each other to be the best people we can be, to secure bright futures for everyone. With our parishes, family and the community, we work together to create a school that is safe, happy, respectful and inspirational.

At St Mary & St Michael's Catholic Primary School, we are inspired by Jesus to be the very best we can be. We look after one another and show respect and love through our relationships with one another. Jesus is invited into our hearts. In the Beatitudes, Jesus invites us to lead a full life with him by explaining what makes people blessed or happy. This is about understanding how loving our neighbour enables us to be happy too. Therefore, having a good relationship with ourselves and the other people in our lives makes us grow and flourish and we respect that everyone is a unique and beautiful part of God's creation. We are all children of God, called to grow in love for him through the person of Jesus Christ and to spread the Good News through the action of the Holy Spirit.

2. Procedures

The following groups have been consulted as part of producing this policy.

- Staff; through staff meetings and INSET
- Governing Body; as a working party to develop the policy and attendance at relevant Diocesan training
- Parents; by newsletter to identify the new policy
- Diocesan Education Service; through dialogue and attendance at relevant training events
- School Council; planned discussion at meetings and follow up discussion with classes.

In consultation with the Governing Body, the policy was implemented in May 2021, reviewed every three years (May 2024), by the Head Teacher, HRSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and school staff.

The policy will be circulated to all members of the Governing Body and all members of staff. The school prospectus contains a statement about HRSE teaching and a full copy of the policy

can be seen on the school website. The prospectus also covers the statutory elements of relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education that are not covered in HRSE though the whole intent of the school curriculum is drawn from its Catholic character. The Education Service has a copy of the school's HRSE policy and it is the duty of the Governing Body to ensure that this is up to date.

3. Rationale

At St Mary & St Michael's, as a primary school in the Diocese of Lancaster, we use the term Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) as it believes that relationships education is about all aspects of growing a fulfilled and happy life, sexual education is a dimension of this greater whole. To further explain this, the defining belief of Christianity is that God took on human form. This endows the human form with an extraordinary dignity that goes beyond that of all other forms of life and shows that humanity alone can embrace this relationship with God. Therefore, our relationship with our own bodies is not casual but infused with the Holy Spirit. Any teaching about love and sexual relationships in school must be rooted in this belief which is expressed in the Church's teaching about relationships, marriage, sex and family life. The Church offers education to young people as it is part of complete human formation. Education about human love is no less a part of a Catholic school's responsibility than teaching about mathematics or English. At St Mary & St Michael's, we teach young people about how to form relationships, including understanding loving relationships and acknowledging that children's first experience of love is in the home. We encourage children from the earliest age to recognise that they are all children of God and that each person shares a God given dignity. As children mature, we encourage them to follow the example of Jesus and live lives inspired by the Gospel virtues, enabling them to follow His commandment to "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31). This is the basis for all relationships in our school. Teaching about relationships in our schools is supported by Christian virtue teaching as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and in line with 'Fit for Mission? Schools'.

The Department for Education in 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019) states that,

“to embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their well-being, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support.” P.8

The Diocese recognises the value of these curriculum aims. However, Catholic schools also have regard for the spiritual welfare of the students and recognise that to know and love God brings lasting happiness.

4. Statutory framework

The statutory framework replaces Statutory Guidance: ‘Sex and Relationships Education Guidance’ (2000). The DfE states that it intends to update the guidance every three years. The statutory guidance is available from the DfE

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>). It should be read in conjunction with this Diocesan guidance and the following documents:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool](#) (a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)
- [Behaviour and Discipline in Schools](#) (advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils)
- [Equality Act 2010 and schools](#)
- [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Alternative Provision](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#) (advice for schools)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) (advice for schools, including advice on [cyberbullying](#)) □
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools](#) (advice for schools)
- [The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance](#) (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- [Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools](#) (guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC))

- [SMSC requirements for independent schools](#) (guidance for independent schools on how they should support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development).
- The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022
- [National Citizen Service](#) guidance for schools

In addition to this comprehensive list of documents, there are a selection of school policies – referenced throughout this policy – which are available on the school website.

5. Purpose of the Statutory Guidance

The guidance intends to help children and young people develop. The knowledge and attributes they gain will support their own, and others', wellbeing and attainment and help young people to become successful and happy adults who make a meaningful contribution to society. The Diocese of Lancaster agrees with these aims and seeks to support them through the appropriate development of the HRSE provision.

The table summarises statutory obligations.

Relationships Education	Relationships and Sex Education	Health Education
All schools providing primary education, including allthrough schools and middle schools (includes schools as set out in the Summary section).	All schools providing secondary education, including all-through schools and middle schools (see Summary section of statutory guidance).	All maintained schools including schools with a sixth form, academies, free schools, non- maintained special schools and alternative provision, including pupil referral units.
		<p>The statutory requirement to provide Health Education does not apply to independent schools – PSHE is already compulsory as independent schools must meet the Independent School Standards as set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.</p> <p>Independent schools, however, may find the principles in the guidance on Health Education helpful in planning an age- appropriate curriculum</p>

The statutory requirements do not apply to sixth form colleges, 16-19 academies or Further Education (FE) colleges, although we would encourage them to support students by offering these subjects. These settings may find the principles helpful, especially in supporting pupils in the transition to FE.

Before children make the transition to high school, they will have a specific puberty session delivered by school staff and supported by resources from the scheme

‘Journey in Love’. This scheme underpins the principles of the Catholic faith and is used to support HRSE teaching throughout school. The following issues will be covered; changes they can expect to see in their body, appearance and emotions during puberty, periods and menstruation, nocturnal emissions for boys, the importance of personal hygiene and a healthy diet. Parents will be consulted prior to this session.

6. Requirements of the Diocese of Lancaster

The Bishop of Lancaster requires that all schools within the Diocese have a policy in line with Section 48 inspection requirements. The key points within this guidance are as follows:

All schools must have an up-to-date HRSE policy that may incorporate Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education policy drawn up by the governing body, and available to parents and for inspection.

This should be developed in consultation with parents and the wider community. Primary schools should have clear parameters on what children will be taught in the transition year before moving to secondary school, and that parents be consulted. All schools’ policies must include how they will teach Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education.

7. Virtues and Values

Gospel virtues and values underpin the HRSE curriculum. The Christian tradition describes behaviours or habits that lead to happiness, human flourishing and a closer relationship with God as virtues. These virtues are described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and fall into two groups. The theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (sometimes love is used instead) are about developing the habits of being open to the work of the Holy Spirit and developing a deeper relationship with God through living a balanced and happy, good life. The cardinal virtues of practical wisdom (prudence), justice, fortitude and temperance help people develop habits of reason, fairness, emotional resilience and mastery. They are human virtues and, as such, are part of the development of people of all faiths or none as they learn how to

flourish, thrive and to have a life supported by strong and caring relationships. The cardinal virtues are drawn from the teachings of Plato and Aristotle and are held in common with people of many faiths and secular beliefs. St. Thomas Aquinas attributes the theological virtues as having their foundation in God, they complete the cardinal virtues and are the way people can reach, “the abundant life” (John 10:10).

At St Mary & St Michael’s, we live out the Gospel values shared in the Beatitudes, throughout the life of school by:

- Keeping Christ and his teachings at the centre of everything we do
- Fully living out and engaging with our Mission, to be the best people we can be
- Recognising that we are all made in the image and likeness of God and celebrating our diversity
- Fostering and nurturing positive relationships throughout school, with staff and pupils acting as role models that demonstrate understanding of how Jesus cared for others
- Having fully inclusive Behaviour for Learning and Anti-Bullying policies where pupils are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour choices, celebrate positives and rectify any wrongs in a safe, caring and respectful environment
- Focusing on half termly values that are rooted in the Beatitudes; pupils are encouraged to reflect on these during circle time discussions and through prayer and liturgy. These values are then shared and celebrated with families and the wider community, during assemblies and other Acts of Worship. This practice will build on the Ignatian tradition developed by the Jesuit school communities.

As children progress through KS2, they are encouraged to develop a deeper understanding of what moral behaviour is and explore why this is important for personal happiness and our role in the community, whilst developing a closer relationship with God through prayer and reflection. By the end of Year 6, children are able to explain their behaviour choices, making reference to their beliefs and values, for example, Jesus’ teachings about forgiveness.

8. The Aim and Objectives of HRSE

The aim of HRSE is part of our aim to educate the complete human person. This is expressed in *Fit for mission? Schools* (2009).

The fundamental needs of the human person are the focus of Catholic education – intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual, and eschatological (Our eternal destiny). These fundamental needs can only be truly fulfilled through a rich and living encounter with the deepest truths about God and the human person.

This is why Christ and His Gospel must be the foundation of the educational project of each school and college, because He is ‘the perfect Man in whom all human values find their fullest perfection’ (Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*).

Therefore, the Catholic school or college is called to keep the Gospel whole and alive amongst pupils, families, and staff.

HRSE should deepen the following areas of understanding:

- ☐ To develop self-respect and love of self.
- ☐ To invite young people to develop and deepen a loving relationship with God.
- ☐ To invite young people to understand that their life has a purpose.
- ☐ To invite young people to develop and deepen relationships with each other based on mutual respect and care and to understand this can be an expression of God’s love.
- ☐ To foster an understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church about how to live a full life, a life of virtue, and the place of human sexuality in living a full life, marriage and parenthood.
- ☐ A strong awareness of their own safety and the nature of consent.
- ☐ To have an understanding of the law in England about Equality and Marriage, appropriate to age and maturity.

In order to achieve this;

- ☐ We will seek to develop attitudes of awe and wonder for the gift and beauty of self, respect for each other as children of God and rejoice in the goodness of God’s creation.
- ☐ We will seek to develop attitudes of responsibility towards ourselves and others, recognising the dignity in all.
- ☐ We will seek to enable children to understand the choices they make and how they can help or harm themselves and others.
- ☐ We will encourage children to learn about expressing their own emotions and being respectful of the emotions and behaviour of others.
- ☐ We will encourage the whole school to be like a loving family recognising God as a merciful and generous father as Jesus taught in the Lord’s prayer.

- We will encourage everyone in the school to recognise their part in the school family and work together for reconciliation when relationships in the school falter.
- We will encourage everyone in the school to value humility, mercy and compassion and to respond with empathy to the problems of others.
- We will develop children's knowledge of when to say 'no' to behaviours or attitudes that harm their dignity or the dignity of others and to be responsible for their own safety.
- We will develop children's experience of what it is to be happy so that they begin to understand the difference between happiness and gratification and value patience.
- We will teach children about the media and their choices, about what to watch, what games to play, what rules apply and that the dignity of all does not just apply to people who are physically seen, it applies to online relationships too.
- We will support children when relationships in their lives are challenging and teach them that there are people in school who will listen if they are experiencing changes that make them frightened or uncomfortable.
- We will foster an atmosphere in school which celebrates the work of the Trinity through the life of the school and its relationship with the Church.
- We will teach children about the beauty of the Church's teaching about love and God's love for them which is shared in the Sacraments.
- We will sensitively share the Church's teaching about the importance of marriage and family life as a way to live in loving relationships with others and with God. Children will know they cannot marry until the age of 18 and that is set out in Law.
- We will encourage children to understand difference and be mindful of people who are vulnerable to discrimination because of their personal or cultural characteristics.

9. Inclusion

At St Mary & St Michael's, we identify that young people mature in different ways. Our teaching about relationships and sexuality is respectful of each child's starting point, their faith, culture and sexual orientation. Lessons are framed by this understanding and young people encouraged to respect difference and develop an approach of dialogue.

Where pupils require further support to understand their own, personal circumstances, we will work with pupils and their families to provide or seek specialist support and professional guidance, for example, transgender pupils.

10. Equality

The governing body has wider obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to ensure that St Mary & St Michael's endeavours to do its best for all of the pupils, irrespective of ability (physical and mental), race, ethnicity, nationality, maternity, pregnancy, sex, gender identity or orientation or whether they are looked after children.

The school ensures equality for all through the implementation of its Accessibility and Equalities Policy, which is regularly updated and shared with staff, governors and families. The Equalities Action Plan is regularly reviewed and monitored by SLT. School will comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which religion or belief is amongst the protected characteristics. Teaching reflects the law as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the broader legal implications of decisions they may make.

Further guidance is available for schools from the Catholic Education Service at <https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/guidance-for-schools/equality>. The guidance covers the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and working with students of other faiths in Catholic schools.

The 2010 Act identifies the following protected characteristics applicable to pupils, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). Age is also a protected characteristic. It does not apply to students, but governors should be aware of this aspect as employers.

Catholic schools should be mindful that part of our primary mission is to support the poor and seek to alleviate any disadvantage. Attention should also focus on the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects to ensure the inclusion of all students in a way that is appropriate for them. Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education, must be accessible for all pupils and must be borne in mind when planning for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities who represent a significant minority of pupils.

Through robust monitoring procedures, the Headteacher ensures teaching that is differentiated, personalised inclusive and accessible to all. The SEND co-ordinator works closely with the HRSE Coordinator, the Headteacher and staff to support children and their

families, to ensure that all pupils are appropriately prepared for the next stage in their life and have strategies to equip them to deal with aggressive behaviour, exploitation and bullying. Pupils who experience acute moments of vulnerability due to family circumstances, such as bereavement, social anxieties, perhaps following relocation or specific physical or mental health problems, receive support in school or via links with outside agencies. In some cases, students may require a personal plan for their education in this area to match their needs and stage of development, reflecting statutory requirements.

All groups of pupils are monitored to ensure that no group is experiencing disadvantage. For example, through incidents of bullying based on the protected characteristics of the Equalities Act in the Headteacher's report, monitoring students' academic outcomes with an active awareness of differences based on sex, ethnic or cultural grouping, financial challenges (for example pupil premium) and the progress made by SEND students. Additionally, the school may consider taking decisive action to support a religious group if evidence showed that they were subject to harassment or if evidence suggested a racial minority was experiencing abusive behaviour. Strategies for dealing with such incidents may take the form of small group, class or whole school assemblies.

The critical characteristic of Catholic education is that all people are children of God. With this belief, underpinning school life perceived limits on students because of their characteristics must always be subject to challenge as the school is part of the Universal Catholic Church. It is through this lens schools should challenge stereotypes and address behaviours such as homophobia, misogyny and sexism. Schools must be alive to the fact that the approach of the Church may not be the same as the approach taken in other areas of life, such as social media. A clear and consistent message about human dignity must be conveyed through the whole of school life by staff, students and those who support the work of the school such as governors.

Governors ensure that the dignity of each person is upheld through the Catholic character of school life. The policy considers the student population at this school and will, if it is appropriate, put additional support in place for students where potential risk is identifiable with particular reference to the protected characteristics. We are an inclusive school and the intent of our curriculum is clear that access to full education, including the spiritual, moral, cultural and emotional education of all pupils is prioritized.

Governors at St Mary & St Michael's understand the implications of the The 'Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment' guidance which was first published by the government in December

2017, updated in May 2018, and later incorporated into Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024. A lack of guidance was been blamed for schools continuing to place victims and alleged perpetrators together in classrooms, even where an alleged offender is on bail.

The guidance covers:

- what sexual violence and sexual harassment is
- what schools' and colleges' legal responsibilities are
- creating a whole school or college approach to safeguarding and child protection; and
- how to respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment

Our rigorous safeguarding practice helps to challenge the views of some pupils that sexual violence and harassment are just part of growing up. These aspects of school life are challenged and a culture of respect fostered, based on reciprocal dignity. In the primary context, children learn the nature of personal privacy, to respect their own bodies. For example, children in Key Stage 1 learn about 'private parts' through using the NSPCC video 'Pantosaurus'.

Staff are supported through annual INSET safeguarding training; both the DHT and HT are biennially trained and updated as DSLs; each staff meeting has a pastoral focus – on both children and adults within the school family; school is part of the DG6 hub for inclusion and safeguarding support; CPOMS is supported and purchased annually. The HT and HRSE co-ordinator also attend annual (and sometimes termly) training from the Diocese in this area. Safeguarding and support of adults, through domestic violence and harassment is shared on the school's website and a rigorous chain of support through SLT and Governors allow for staff to communicate concerns confidentially. All Governors attend annual regular Diocesan training and through our Link Governor, training in these areas is regularly reviewed.

All teaching in HRSE, including that which covers areas around the protected characteristics, must be sensitive to the age, cultural background and family experiences of students. The Catholic view of human dignity should challenge the cultural assumptions that can underpin prejudices, such as racism, sexism and religious discrimination. Catholic schools should robustly challenge homophobia or any inequitable behaviours based on a person's sexual orientation or gender as an infringement of human dignity. Though schools will teach the Church's view on what it means to be human, and the challenges this offers to a wide range of lifestyles, the needs of the individual students will remain paramount. In a Catholic school, we aim to see the child, a Child of God, as a person in need of love and care. The DfE's

guidance makes specific mention of teaching about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender characteristics, which it shortens to LGBT. The guidance states,

"At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT, they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson. Schools are free to determine how they do this, and we expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at an appropriate point as part of this area of the curriculum."

At St Mary & St Michael's, we address questions about sexuality and gender as and when they arise, in an age appropriate manner. Our school's behaviour policy and anti-bullying policy identifies all protected characteristics as possible triggers for aggressive or bullying behaviours. We train all staff to support children who are asking questions about themselves or others in these areas in partnership with their families and they know the legal requirements incumbent on the school with specific reference to sex or gender requirements. The dignity of each child is central to our care and we support any questioning through a culture of listening and seeing them as created in the image and likeness of God. We do not rush to label but offer children and their families time to discuss and explore what is best for them as individuals within our school community.

11 Programme of study

A revised programme of study has been prepared to support educators in our family of schools as they enable our young people to grow in faith and understanding of themselves, their relationship with God and with one another. The Department for Education has prepared a statutory programme for 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' which has been a compulsory requirement from September 2020. The Diocese of Lancaster began working on Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) in 2016

The intent of the programme of study is to encourage young people to recognise their interior beauty, their dignity as a human and through this to understand and value the worth of others. We hope that this builds on the experience of the home where, as children, we all experience our first expressions of love and form our early relationships. The challenge in school life is to develop this not just in an academic sense, but as a lived expression of belief ultimately, an invitation to hear the Good News.

“We must wonder! We must create an environment of wonder! We must create a climate of wonder! This task is closest to the family...Wonder is needed so that beauty might enter into human life, into society and the nation...We need to marvel at everything that is found in man.” Pope St. John Paul II

Creating a climate of wonder can seem a far cry from the modern world our schools are called to serve, though this is our calling as educators in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Lancaster. Engaging with the Church’s teaching about human loving enables us to share with our young people the wonder of human life and the happiness that is waiting for us in Jesus. As always, this is an invitation, a way to deepen understanding of what it means to be fully human.

The Programme of Study places the Diocese of Lancaster programme next to the statutory obligation it fulfils. Any additional material in HRSE is written in italics so it is easy to identify. Areas from the statutory plan not covered in the HRSE framework are listed at the end. Governing bodies and head teachers should be mindful that from 2020 OfSTED will inspect the new ‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education’ and Section 48 will continue to examine provisions in HRSE.

School has a thorough teaching and learning policy available on the school website which outlines the range of strategies employed to deliver high quality learning experiences in all subjects and for all children. Details of specific practice can be discovered fully in this document. Progress and attainment will be considered inline with other subjects with statutory expectations and our assessment policy outlines how this will be done specifically. The assessment policy is available on the school website.

With specific reference to HRSE school staff employ a variety of recognised resources which include, but are not exclusive, SCARF (Coram education), the RE Directory, Journey in Love, Come and See and The Vine & Branches. Where other subjects within the national curriculum cover aspects of HRSE they are subject to the same rigour detailed in the teaching and learning policy.

12. Parents

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children. The school should support parents in this task. The role of the school should be that of assisting and completing

the work of parents, furnishing children and adolescents with an evaluation of “*sexuality as value and task of the whole person, created male and female in the image of God*”. (Educational Guidance in Human Love (1983) Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education n69) Children’s first experience of relationships and love are in the home. At our schools we seek to work with parents and support them as their children grow and begin to develop their own character as well as experiencing changes in their physical appearance.

Whilst the majority of the programme of study is developed through the ethos of the school, the school actively seeks to involve and support parents in learning about HRSE by sharing the programme of study/published resources to be used, sharing information via the school prospectus and website, notifying parents when visitors are coming to school or when a sensitive subject, such as puberty, is to be taught. Parents are always welcome to ask questions about the content of the curriculum.

13. Right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw)

Parents have the right to request that their child not participate in some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request, it would be good practice for the Headteacher to discuss the application with parents and ensure that they understand the nature and purpose of the curriculum in a Catholic context. A discussion should follow, as appropriate, involving the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Schools will want to record and document this process. The Headteacher will hold these discussions and a record will be kept in diary format.

Good practice is also likely to include the Headteacher discussing with parents the benefits of receiving this education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. For example, the possible social or emotional impact of withdrawal, the likelihood of them hearing a peer’s version of the content, rather than the teacher’s. However, parents may prefer to discuss sex education to their child at home instead.

14. Teaching and Assessing HRSE

Mrs Luena Archibald is responsible for the leadership, co-ordination and monitoring of the HRSE programme, with the support of the Chair of Governors, Mr Paul McCann Foundation Governor with responsibility for HRSE, will be included in that monitoring.

Class teachers will be responsible for the teaching of HRSE to their classes. RE, Science, Computing, PE and PHSE subject leaders will work alongside the HRSE coordinator to ensure a holistic approach.

Where appropriate, other agencies may be used to support the teaching of HRSE eg. Life Education Team, school nurse etc.

All staff are involved in fostering healthy attitudes, living Gospel virtues and shaping behaviour based on a Christian understanding of how to lead a good life. Staff are called to be role models of the school's ethos in their relationships with other staff members, their conduct towards parents and their care for the children in the school. Staff who are not Catholic themselves must conduct their behaviour in school in accordance with the vision and mission of the school.

Teaching and learning about human relationships will be part of the life of the school. However, the programme of study will be taught through cross-curricular dimensions where appropriate, such as R.E., science, computing, PE and PHSE.

Sometimes, the children's learning will be best supported by using other agencies, such as the school nurse, or other visitors to school. Such visitors will be guided to read the protocol for visitors at St Mary & St Michael's and agree to follow its instruction.

There are elements of the statutory framework that are not covered in the Diocese of Lancaster's HRSE programme. These elements are listed at the end of the 2020 programme of study. Through our comprehensive curriculum map, all subject leaders ensure HRSE is fully covered in their planned programmes of study. The curriculum maps are available on the school website

Assessment forms part of the statutory framework. The HRSE programme includes a self-audit for schools. Each year at St Mary & St Michael's, we use the Diocesan self-audit to monitor all aspects of HRSE. Governors may use the CES RSE audit tools to monitor their knowledge and understanding of this area. The HRSE framework and the elements of the statutory framework not covered by HRSE are monitored and assessed through whole school planning, written pieces of work, teacher's notes on discussions and targeted lesson evaluations. On occasion, the school uses questionnaires to evaluate students' sense of well-being and may use written or practical assessments where appropriate, for example, to evaluate understanding of basic first aid.

15. Dealing with difficult questions

The Governing Body desires that HRSE lessons take place in a positive framework, where students experience a growing appreciation for well-being – their own and that of others - and a deeper understanding that the Church teaches a path of the wholeness of mind, body and spirit. Part of this is creating an atmosphere where questions can be asked openly, knowing that their questions will be answered and understanding that staff or other students will not judge these questions. It is vital, therefore, that teachers invest time in creating this framework of mutual trust and care while respecting personal information. The HRSE co-ordinator must be given access to train, support and to facilitate teachers to enable such discussions by creating carefully negotiated ground rules and distancing strategies. The Department for Education (2000) offers the following guidelines for dealing with questions:

- Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting. Many teachers are concerned about responding to unexpected questions or comments from pupils in a whole-class situation. Having a set of ground rules should reduce the chances of this happening, but teachers will need support and training so that they prepare for the unexpected.

For example: If a question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupil of the ground rules. If the pupil needs further support, the teacher can refer her or him to the appropriate person, such as a school counsellor, school nurse, helpline, or an outside agency or service;

- If a teacher doesn't know the answer to a question, it is essential to acknowledge this, and to suggest that the pupil or teacher or both together research the subject later. Children will be encouraged to ask these questions at home and share their thoughts with parents and carers.
- If a problem is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. In this way, the pupil will feel they have received respectful treatment, but the rest of the class will not have to listen to personal experience or inappropriate information. To maintain trust and respect the teacher must remember to

talk with the pupil later; and if a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the school's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy procedures.¹

Sensitive subjects in HRSE always need to be framed so that the young people who are participating know that there is pastoral support if any of the issues discussed make them feel the need to talk further or share confidential information. The safeguarding framework of the school should frame this, and it is paramount that all staff teaching HRSE have up to date safeguarding professional development.

Questions asked by students that are a cause for concern for the teacher, for example, because of their explicit or graphic content, should be addressed following the procedures in the school's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, which are available from the school website or the Head Teacher. The school will ensure that these policies are available for all staff, governors, parents and students, along with the confidential nature of how to obtain advice and guidance as a result of any issues or questions that may arise.

It will be made clear to all that unconditional confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where illegal or abusive concerns come to light, and these will be dealt with under the terms of the relevant safeguarding policies which includes the annually updated Keeping Children safe in Education policy.

¹ Sex and Relationships Guidance, 4.5 'Dealing with questions' 0116