

Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School



Catholic
Primary School
Congleton
A Voluntary Academy

Relationship and Sex Education Policy

*Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School is a Christ centred learning community,
where all are safe, valued and loved."*

Policy Schedule	Date	Signed
Approved by the Governing Body:	21.1.2025	Headteacher: Amy Butterfield Chair of Governors: Val Bridge
To be reviewed:	January 2026	

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

“Be completely humble and gentle;
be patient, bearing with one another in love.
Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.
There is one body and one Spirit,
just as you were called to one hope when you were called;”

Ephesians 4:2-4

1. Introduction and Consultation

In this policy, the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions about relationships and sex education (RSE) at Saint Mary’s. We set out our rationale for and approach to relationships and sex education in the school.

In determining this policy, the Local Governing Body has consulted with the following groups:

- Parents / carers
- Teaching staff

Implementation and Review

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Headteacher, RSE Co-ordinator/Lead and the Governing Body.

Dissemination

The policy will be given to all members of the Governing Body, and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the document will be available to all parents through the school’s website and a copy is available in the school office.

2. Defining Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

The DfE guidance defines RSE as **“lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage and family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health.”**

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.

The DfE identifies three main elements:

1. **Attitudes and values**
2. **Personal and social skills**
3. **Knowledge and understanding**

In primary schools, the focus 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.”* This includes the topics of families and the people who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships, and being safe.

3. Statutory Curriculum Requirements

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

At Saint Mary's, we are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

4. Rationale

‘I have come that you might have life and have it to the full’ (John 10:10)

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 RSE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church’s teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals. At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity; Father, Son and Holy 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. RSE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationships, as it is there that sexuality grows and develops.

Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales and as advocated by the DfE, RSE will be firmly embedded in the **Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural (SMSC)** and **PSHE** framework, as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and is integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils.

All RSE 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, and support will be provided to help pupils deal with different sets of values.

5. Values and Virtues

Our programme enshrines 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.**

6. Aims and Objectives

Aim

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. We 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.

In partnership with parents, we aim to provide children and young people with a *“positive and prudent sexual education”* which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

Objectives

To develop the following attitudes and virtues:

- Reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility.
- Respect for the dignity of every human being—in their own person and in the person of others.
- Joy in the goodness of the created world and their own bodily natures.
- Responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others.
- Recognising and valuing their own sexual identity and that of others.
- Celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love.
- Recognising the importance of marriage and family life.
- Fidelity in relationships.

To develop the following personal and social skills:

- Making sound judgements and good choices which have integrity and are respectful of commitments.
- Loving and being loved, and the ability to form friendships and loving, stable relationships free from exploitation, abuse, and bullying.
- Managing emotions within relationships, and when relationships break down, with confidence, sensitivity, and dignity.
- Managing conflict positively, recognising the value of difference.
- Cultivating humility, mercy, and compassion, learning to forgive and be forgiven.
- Developing self-esteem and confidence, demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others.
- Building resilience and the ability to resist unwanted pressures, recognising the influence and impact of the media, internet, and peer groups.
- Being patient, delaying gratification, and learning to recognise the appropriate stages in the development of relationships, and how to love chastely.
- Assessing risks and managing behaviours to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity.

To know and understand:

- The Church's teaching on relationships and the nature and meaning of sexual love.
- The Church's teaching on marriage and the importance of marriage and family life.
- The centrality and importance of virtue in guiding human living and loving.
- The physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty.
- The facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually, and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation.

7. Content and Delivery

Broad Content of RSE

Three aspects of RSE—**attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding**—will be provided in three inter-related ways:

1. The whole school / ethos dimension.
2. A cross-curricular dimension (e.g., Science, RE, PE).
3. A specific relationships and sex curriculum.

(See Appendix A for specific DfE content expectations by the end of primary school).

Programme / Resources

Saint Mary's follows "**Life to the Full**" published by TenTen, a Catholic organisation approved by the Diocese of Shrewsbury. These materials are accessed through an online platform and include:

- Teaching materials and activities.
- Prayer resources.
- Links to home.
- Staff enrichment.

Teaching strategies will include: establishing ground rules, distancing techniques, discussion, project learning, reflection, role-play, and values clarification.

Inclusion and Differentiated Learning

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to their abilities, levels of maturity, and personal circumstances (e.g., sexual orientation, faith, or culture) and is taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination. Lessons will help children realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, bullying (including cyber-bullying), and prejudice-based language.

Pupils with particular difficulties, whether of a physical or intellectual nature, will receive appropriately differentiated support to enable them to achieve mature knowledge, understanding, and skills.

Assessment

Within RSE, assessment can be difficult to quantify so we will incorporate "ipsative assessment"—comparing how much a pupil has moved on from the start of the unit to the end. This allows space for personal reflection to accurately assess, for example, the development of self-confidence or their sense of identity and values.

8. Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents (and other carers) 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.

- **Consultation:** Parents will be consulted during the development and review of the RSE programme.
- **Communication:** Parents/carers will be informed by letter when sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered so they can be prepared to talk to their children.
- **Resources:** Resources used by the school (TenTen) are available for parents to view on request.

Right to Withdraw

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of **sex education** delivered as part of statutory RSE.

- **Primary School Rule:** The Headteacher will automatically grant a request to withdraw a pupil from any **sex education** delivered in primary schools, **other than as part of the science curriculum**.
- **No Right to Withdraw from Relationships Education:** There is **no right to withdraw** from Relationships Education or Health Education (DfE, June 2019).

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from sex education, they are asked to notify the school by contacting the Headteacher. The Headteacher will discuss the request with parents to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. If a pupil is excused, the school will ensure the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Local Governing Body

- Draw up the RSE policy, in consultation with parents and teachers.
- Ensure the policy is available to parents and is in accordance with other whole school policies (e.g., SEN, ethos).
- Ensure parents know of their right to withdraw their children from sex education.
- Establish a link governor (currently **Julia Toft**) to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme.
- Ensure the policy provides proper coverage of National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHE/SMSC.

Headteacher

- Takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- Liaises with the Governing Body, parents, Diocesan Schools' Service, and Local Authority.
- Responsible for specific RSE programme delivery alongside the RE Co-ordinator.

RE/RSE Co-ordinator

- **RSE Lead:** Greg Merrick
- Responsible for supporting other staff in implementation, disseminating information, and providing in-service training.
- Monitors provision by examining plans and samples of work.

All Staff

- RSE is a whole-school issue. All teachers have a responsibility of care and must actively contribute to the guardianship of the physical, moral, and spiritual well-being of pupils.
- Teachers are expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school.
- All staff will be involved in developing the "attitudes and values" aspect of RSE and act as role models of healthy relationships.

External Visitors

External visitors may be called upon to deliver aspects of RSE. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never replace teacher-led sessions. Visitors must adhere to the school's code of practice and the CES guidance 'Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools'.

10. Safe and Effective Practice

Balanced Curriculum

Whilst promoting Catholic values, we will ensure pupils are offered a balanced programme that offers a range of viewpoints. Pupils will receive clear scientific information and cover aspects of the law pertaining to RSE. Knowing about facts and exploring differing viewpoints is not incompatible with our promotion of Catholic teaching.

Children's Questions

The Governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere where pupils can ask questions freely without fear of bullying.

- **Ground Rules:** Teachers and pupils will negotiate ground rules to create a supportive climate.
- **Sensitive Issues:** Sensitive or controversial issues will be discussed openly within the context of the RSE programme to protect children from harm and exploitation.
- **Inappropriate Questions:** Teachers will not answer questions during class time if they hint at abuse, are deliberately tendentious, or are of a personal nature.

Safeguarding and Confidentiality

Effective RSE may lead to disclosures of safeguarding issues.

- Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality (e.g., in matters of illegality or abuse).
- If a teacher suspects a child is at risk of abuse, they must follow the school's **Safeguarding Policy** and immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about issues discussed in the programme.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

- The RSE Co-ordinator will monitor the provision of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work, and samples of pupils' work at regular intervals.
- The programme will be evaluated by means of questionnaires/response sheets given to pupils, and/or by discussion with staff and parents.
- The results of the evaluation will be reported to interested parties and the Governors will consider these before amending the policy.
- The Local Governing Body remains ultimately responsible for the policy.

Appendix A – Statutory Content (DfE 2019)

By the end of primary school, pupils should know:

Families and people who care for me

- 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 other families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their own 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 marriage 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

- 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.
- 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

- 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

- 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.

Being safe

- 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.