

Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust



Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

Review date		October 2025	
Signed Headteacher		Signed Chair of Governors	
Alison James		Caroline Pinto	

Statement of Intent

In this policy, the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions, rationale and approach with regard to relationships, sex and health education (RSHE).

At Sacred Heart, the RSHE policy is intended to celebrate the uniqueness of the individual and God's gift of life. Having a religious character means we are committed to promoting, ensuring, and nurturing community cohesion as we prepare our children for the relationships, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life. All that we teach will be in the context of our Catholic Faith.

Consultations that have taken place:

- parents are sent the link to the Ten Ten site every year
- review of RSE curriculum content with staff
- consultation with school governors Implementation and Review of Policy

Dissemination

The draft policy will be given to all members of the Governing Body, and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Details of the content of the RSE curriculum will also be published on the school's website.

DEFINING RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

The DfE guidance states that "children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way".

1. 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. 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."
2. This would include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe

STATUTORY CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

From Pentecost (Summer) Term 2021, the Health Education (HE) and Relationships Education (RE) aspects of PSHE will be compulsory in all schools in the form of the new Primary Curriculum Framework for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE).

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSHE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSHE go further.

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 RSHE 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 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 relationship 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 (and the Welsh Assembly Government), RSHE will be firmly embedded in the PSHE framework as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social, and intellectual development of pupils. It is centred on Christ's vision of being human as good news and will be positive and prudent, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.

All RSHE will be in accordance with the Church's moral teaching. It will emphasise the central importance of marriage and the family whilst acknowledging that all pupils have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from. It will also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

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 the 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. (From Pentecost Term 2023)

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. To develop the following personal and social skills:
- making sound judgements and good choices which have integrity, and which are respectful of the individual's 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 and so developing the ability to assess pressures and respond appropriately;
- 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 in order 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.

Outcomes

INCLUSION AND DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING

We will ensure RSHE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, faith or culture and is taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination.

Lessons will also help children to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber-bullying), use of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help.

EQUALITIES OBLIGATIONS

The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of disability,

educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, pregnancy, maternity, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked-after children.

PROGRAMME / RESOURCES

We will be following the 'Life to the Full' RSHE program from Ten Ten as approved by the Diocese. This programme features three themes which are repeated and built upon across the year groups.

The three themes are:

Created and loved by God (this explores the individual) The Christian imperative to love self, made in the image and likeness of God, shows an understanding of the importance of valuing and understanding oneself as the basis for personal relationships.

Created to love others (this explores an individual's relationships with others) God is love. We are created out of love and for love. The command to love is the basis of all Christian morality.

Created to live in community – local, national & global (this explores the individual's relationships with the wider world)

Human beings are relational by nature and live in the wider community. Through our exchange with others, our mutual service and through dialogue, we attempt to proclaim and extend the Kingdom of God for the good of individuals and the good of society.

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- experiential
- active
- brainstorming

film & video

- group work
- role-play
- trigger drawings
- values clarification
- prayer and reflection

Pupils' learning will be continually assessed through ongoing teacher observations and recorded in the class AfL book.

PARENTS AND CARERS

We recognise that parents (and other carers who stand in their place) are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children. Therefore, the school will support parents and carers by providing material to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help parents/carers to find out more. Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSHE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning.

The 'Life to the Full' programme includes an online parent portal, where parents can log in to view the programme and find out what the pupils will be taught within the programme of study. It also provides resources to be used at home to aid further discussion, as well as advice on managing difficult conversations.

Parents must be consulted before this policy is ratified by the governors. They will be consulted at every stage of the development of the RSHE programme, as well as during the process of monitoring, review and evaluation. They will be able to view the resources used by the school in the RSHE programme through the online parent portal. Our aim is that, at the end of the consultation process, every parent and carer will have full confidence in the school's RSHE programme to meet their child's needs.

Parents continue to have the right to withdraw their children from Sex Education, except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. Should parents wish to withdraw their children, they are asked to notify the school by contacting the headteacher. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning.

We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed. Please refer to the DfE guidance Page 17 for further details on the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw).

BALANCED CURRICULUM

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSHE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSHE. Knowing about facts and enabling young people to explore differing viewpoints is not the same as promoting behaviour and is not incompatible with our school's promotion of Catholic teaching. We will ensure that pupils have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHING THE PROGRAMME

Responsibility for the specific relationships, sex and health education programme lays with all teaching staff. However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSHE programme. They will be role models for pupils of good, healthy, wholesome relationships as between staff, other adults and pupils. They will also be contributing to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.

OTHER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING RSHE

Governors

- draw up the RSHE policy, in consultation with parents and teachers. This is done every year in the form of a leaflet with a login to the website.
- ensure that the policy is available to parents.
- ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g., SEND, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs.
- ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children from elements of sex education.
- ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSHE is within PSHE.

Head teacher

The Head teacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, the Diocesan Schools' Service and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

All Staff

RSHE is a whole school matter. All teachers have a responsibility of care; as well as fostering academic progress, they should actively contribute to the guardianship and guidance of the physical, moral, and spiritual well-being of their pupils. Teachers will be expected to teach RSHE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSHE. All staff have been included in the development of this policy and all staff should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

This RSHE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHE framework. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents (for example, Anti-Bullying policy, Safeguarding Policy, etc). Pupils with particular difficulties, whether of a physical or intellectual nature, will receive appropriately differentiated support in order to enable them to achieve mature knowledge, understanding and skills. Teaching methods will be adapted to meet the varying needs of this group of pupils.

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

The governors and leadership team want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSHE can take place. They want to ensure that pupils can ask questions freely, be confident that their questions will be answered, and be sure that they will be free from bullying or harassment from other children and young people.

Controversial or Sensitive issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSHE. These may be matter of maturity, of personal involvement or experience, of disagreement with the official

teaching of the Church, of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious, or harmful activity. The governors believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSHE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. Some questions may raise issues which would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, e.g., where a child or young person's questions hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature. This will be dealt with in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE AT RISK

Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSHE takes place. Effective RSHE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue. Teachers will need to be aware of the needs of their pupils and not let any fears and worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects that a child or young person is a victim of, or is at risk of, abuse, they are required to follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ADVICE

All governors, teachers, support staff, parents and pupils must be made aware of this policy, particularly as it relates to issues of advice and confidentiality. All lessons, especially those in the RSHE programme, will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and sex, developing appropriate personal and social skills, and becoming appreciative of the values and attitudes which underpin the Christian understanding of what it means to be fully human.

Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in the programme. Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties. Teachers should explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive, for instance. Teachers will explain that in such circumstances, they would have to inform others, e.g., parents, headteacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

MONITORING. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The RSHE Co-ordinator will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils work at regular intervals.

The programme will be evaluated through the use of:

- questionnaires
- response sheets
- needs assessment given to pupils
- discussion with pupils, staff, and parents.

The results of the evaluation will be reported to school leaders and Governors and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy.