



St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Part of the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

RSHE Policy

"Believe, Succeed and Soar"

Policy Updated	Date: March 2023
Shared with staff/Parents	
Approved by Governors	
Review date	March 2024

"Believe, Succeed and Soar."

Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy (RSHE)

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

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

Consultations which take/have taken place in school include:

- Pupil Voice
- Parent/Carer Questionnaires and meetings
- Review of RSHE curriculum content with staff and pupils
- Consultation with wider school community and outside agencies as and when necessary e.g. school nurse
- Consultation with school governors

Implementation and Review of Policy

Implementation of the policy will take place after final consultation with the Governors in the Summer 1 Term 2023.

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Head teacher, RSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and Staff. The next review date is April 2024.

Dissemination

The draft 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 via email. Details of the content of the RSE curriculum will also be published on the school's web site for the consultation period and shared via email. The curriculum is shared with parents annually, in the term prior to the main teaching of RSE teaching

Defining Relationship 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 school, the focus will 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

¹ Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 4

² Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 19

topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

Relationship and Sex Education provides a basis for children within which they can grow in confidence as people and become informed, thoughtful, responsible, healthy and safe members of society.

It encompasses PSHE and citizenship as well as relationship, sex and health education, drugs education, anti-bullying awareness, safety, civic rights, duties and responsibilities, mental health, physical health, online safety, knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts, importance of self-care and developing thinking skills.

It seeks to educate the whole person: spiritually, intellectually, morally, emotionally, socially, psychologically, and physically towards Christian maturity.

Children learn about relationships in the context of the Catholic faith. Every area of school life contributes to relationship and health education and helps young people learn to respect themselves and others, making safe, healthy and informed choices as they grow up and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

Statutory Curriculum Requirement

It is a legal requirement to teach those aspects of RSHE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

Rationale

‘I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL’

(Jn.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. RSHE, 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 centered 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.

Aims of RSHE and the Mission Statement:

'Christ is at the centre of St Mary's as we strive to nurture and care for all our community members by encouraging them to **Believe, Succeed and **Soar** within God's love, to achieve the very best that they can, in all areas.'**

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSHE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, our school's shared vision, mission and key values the 5Rs (resilience, responsibility, reflectiveness, resourcefulness, relationship) aim to and state that we will endeavor to raise pupils' self-esteem, help them to grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of all persons and develop caring and sensitive attitudes. It is in this context that we commit ourselves:

In partnership with parents, to provide children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education"³ 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

Aims

- Encourage children's growth in self-respect, acknowledging we are all created in the likeness of God
- Help children develop an understanding that love is the central basis of relationships
- Provide relationship and sex education in the wider context of relationships

³ *Gravissimum Educationis* 1

- Help children to develop a healthier, safer, informed lifestyle with specific health education
- Prepare children to play an active role as citizens and to understand the Catholic vision of what it means to be citizens of the Kingdom of God
- Enable children to develop a personal, moral compass and code rooted in Gospel values

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;
- how to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception;
- how to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

All children have equal access to relationship and sex education. Children learn about relationship, sex and health education through RE, PE, IT and Science as well as other areas of a broad and balanced curriculum by way of a cross curricular, integrated and meaningful approach.

Outcomes

Inclusion and Support and Challenge

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 Obligation

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.

Broad Content of RSHE

Three aspects of RSHE - attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills will be provided in three inter-related ways: the whole school / ethos dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific relationships, sex and health curriculum.

Programme and Resources

Please refer to appendices to this policy which provide further information about the programme coverage, content and resources for suggested use.

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- experiential
- active
- brainstorming
- film & video
- group work
- role-play
- values clarification

Assessment and Monitoring

Assessment and evaluation is carried out by the class teacher, RE coordinator and SLT to ensure appropriate coverage, compliance with school policy, and quality of teaching. Knowledge, understanding and skills will be assessed through pupil self-assessment, peer group assessment, teacher assessment and whole school monitoring programme which includes staff, parents and governors. Monitoring strategies such as Book Looks, exemplars of work, whole school sharing/moderation of work, Learning Walks, Parent/Staff/Pupil/Governor/Pupil Voice are utilised within the annual monitoring cycle.

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 if appropriate, provide training opportunities to parents and provide support from class teachers if requested. Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the majority of the Relationship and Sex Education will be taught. Parents of Year 6 children are invited in to view the material in more details should they wish to.

Parents will be consulted before this policy is ratified by the governors. They will be consulted at key stages of the development of the RSHE programme. They will be able to view the resources used by the school in the RSHE programme via email and the website. 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 Science National Curriculum. Should parents wish to withdraw their children, they are asked to notify the school by contacting the head teacher. 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).

Pedagogical Principles

The teaching about love and sexual relationships in our Catholic school is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching about what it is to be truly human in Christ, what it means to live well in relationship with others and be presented within a positive framework of Christian virtue.

The RSHE programme enshrines core pedagogical virtues. It is:

- **Progressive & Developmental**

It is continuous and developmental. It is a process which is planned from beginning to end with one phase of education informing the work of the next so that children and young people can be led to a deeper and fuller understanding by degrees at a rate which corresponds to their maturing.

- **Differentiated through Support and Challenge**

The RSE programme is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils and is taught in a way that allows access to those pupils at different stages of cognitive and emotional development. Learning and teaching methods are adapted and specialist resources and training is provided for those with particular needs. Children, especially those with special educational needs and disabilities, are not at any point withdrawn from RSHE because of lack of resources, training or to catch up in other subjects. Teaching and learning is adapted and scaffolded accordingly to include all children of all abilities.

- **Cross-curricular**

Teaching on relationships and sexuality is in each relevant part of the curriculum. Whilst, for example, some aspects of RSHE will be more appropriately explored in science lessons and some more appropriately explored in RE lessons, each is informed by the other. Each discipline speaks with consistency about the meaning of human love and the virtues that are enshrined in the Church's teaching on human love.

- **Integrated**

The RSHE programme ensures that there is correspondence between phases and across disciplines and also ensure that parents are fully involved in the planning and evaluation of

the teaching of relationships and sexuality. Ideally, pupils should hear a consistent message about the meaning and value of human sexuality at home, in the parish and at school. This is achieved by the home, parish and school working together to integrate the teaching of RSE.

- **Co-ordinated**

RSHE is given the time and importance it deserves by those who plan and teach it in school. RSHE is taken seriously by school leaders; led by the RE Coordinator who uses time and expertise to co-ordinate the subject with dedication and commitment at a senior level; is taught by those committed to doing it well; taught as part of a whole-school approach by those who are able to celebrate – not merely tolerate – the teaching of the Church on love and human sexuality.

- **Balanced**

Whilst promoting Catholic virtues, the school ensures that children and young people are offered a broad and balanced RSHE programme which provides them with clear factual, scientific information when relevant and meets the statutory requirements placed on schools.

RE and the RSHE Curriculum

The RSHE curriculum, linked with RE, is based on three core aims within which there is a broad overlap. 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.

Each theme covers the core strands of 'Education in Virtue' and 'Religious Understanding' as well as strands which cover the PSHE content of the theme.

Christian virtue and RSE

Each theme begins with a statement of the virtues which are necessary to living well in relationship with others and these virtues underpin the teaching but also should emerge as a consequence of it. Virtues are habits which are learned from experience and are gained through imitation the same virtues being modelled by those who teach. They express the qualities of character that we seek to develop in our pupils, through our exemplification by the whole community of which the pupils are a part. These virtues reflect our Christian tradition but they are also, of course, fundamental human virtues which are universally shared.

An overview and audit of the RSHE themes is attached, alongside the Come and See topics, Word of the Week and other approaches/events in school which support them. In consultation with the Diocesan guidelines, the Nottingham Primary RE Advisor and approved resources including the

Journey In Love materials and those available from the CES, elements of each theme have been separated into individual year groups in order to ensure the its suitability regarding the age and ability of children, that progression is clear and consistent and to ensure full, complete coverage. This is outlined in St Mary's *RSHE Curriculum* document which encompasses a cross-curricular approach alongside other aspects of the National Curriculum.

The majority of the RSHE programme is taught within the 'Come and See' RE Curriculum. See appendix attached. The remaining content of the RSHE curriculum is planned for and taught within the academic year according to the class teacher who will judge the readiness of the children and the appropriate time to teach the content to ensure it is relevant, meaningful and appropriate. It is considered that the end of the year, especially for children in Years 5 and 6, is not always the most appropriate time to ensure the full content is covered.

The teaching of RSE is conducted in a supportive, welcoming environment where respect, trust, appropriateness and confidentiality is discussed before and after each session and adapted to the needs, age and suitability of the children. Questions are invited and according to the context of the learning, may be posed anonymously to preserve confidentiality and anonymity. Strategies are discussed with the children about the appropriateness of sharing their own and others' experiences using a sentence starter such as, '*Someone I know...*'

RSHE in the Foundation Stage is covered within the Come and See programme, the Journey In Love programme and included within the PSED, Physical Development and Understanding the World areas of learning.

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 e.g female gender mutilation. 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.

Responsibilities

Responsibility for the specific relationships, sex and health education programme lays with the Headteacher and the RE Co-ordinator. 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.

External Visitors

Our school will often call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSE. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher led sessions. It is important that any external visitor is clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in school delivering a session. Any visitor must adhere to our code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Checklist for External Speakers to Schools'⁴. Health professionals should follow the school's policies, minimising the potential for disclosures or inappropriate comments using negotiated ground rules and distancing techniques as other teachers would. They will ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice.

⁴ CES Checklist for External Speakers to Schools, 2016

Other Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

- consult with the school's Headteacher and RE Co-ordinator on the content of the RSHE policy, in consultation with parents and teachers;
- 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;
- establish a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used;
- ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSHE within PSHE.

Headteacher

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.

PSHE/RSHE/RE Co-Ordinator

The RE co-ordinator and head teacher have a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to RSHE and the provision of in-service training.

All Staff

RSHE is a whole school issue. 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 policy supports and complements a wide range of other policies including Behaviour, bullying, SEND, Teaching and Learning, Safeguarding, Science, Computing and E-Safety and RE. Learning about RSHE is taught in a meaningful, relevant context using a cross-curricular context. Explicit teaching for RSHE for certain year groups is outlined on termly mind maps, RE medium term plans and weekly subject planning.

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.

Learning about RSHE in other curriculum areas will link to/complement learning in those areas identified in the RSHE audit and overall coverage document.

Children's Questions

The governors aim 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 children, 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. (See also Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education, Managing difficult questions, Page 23 for more detail)

Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, e.g., where a child or young person's questions hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature.

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, all teachers, all support staff, all parents and all 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.

Relationship and sex education requires sensitive teaching which is matched in particular by the specific needs and concerns of children. Teachers use their professional judgement when addressing issues in relationship and sex education and careful consideration is given to the inevitable wide and varied experience and backgrounds of the children in the class.

All teachers involved in relationship and sex education are required to be sensitive, credible and consistent. The school will ensure that all staff are familiar with their legal and professional responsibilities.

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, in line with the school's pastoral care policy. 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, head teacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

Safeguarding

When teaching any part of the RSHE programme or any sensitive issues, children and young people who may give cause for concern or who are believed to be at risk are reported immediately to the

school's Designated Safeguarding Leads, recorded on CPOMs and safeguarding procedures are closely followed. See the Safeguarding Policy.

CPD

Staff training needs are consulted annually and the Head teacher ensures that training needs are met. Resources and training is accessed as and when necessary in order to ensure staff are confident and skilled to teach the RSHE curriculum effectively and that resources used are of a high quality. The school seeks guidance, resources and CPD from the Diocese and regularly attend training sessions offered.

The Governing Body

The Governing body and Foundation Governors in particular recognise their responsibility to ensure the relationship and sex education curriculum reflects the Church's teaching. The school's link Governor for RSHE is

The Role of Parents

Recognising that parents are the primary educators of their children, the school will seek to support them in this task. The Governing body fully subscribes to the views of the Catholic Church. The Governors will always strive to ensure that parents are supported in their task. Parents are consulted and kept informed when any changes and developments are made to the RSHE curriculum and policy. Parental CPD sessions and guidance will be offered during the monitoring and consultation process and offered where applicable and appropriate.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the schools relationship and sex education programme but not from those areas which are expected to be covered in the Science National Curriculum. They are invited to discuss any concerns with the head teacher. They must notify the Governors if they decide to withdraw their child from the relationship and sex education programme. When a child is withdrawn from the programme, school will provide the necessary information and resources for parents to support the RSE education at home.

Review

This policy is updated annually.

Appendices

The documents linked to this policy as appendices are:

- GSM RSHE Coverage and Links Overview
- GSM RSHE Curriculum Ladder
- PSHE Whole School Curriculum Map
- Journey In Love Parent Guide and Programme

Review Date: April 2024

