



St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

RSHE Policy

“Believe, Succeed and Soar.”

Policy Updated	September 2025
Shared with staff/Parents	September 2025
Approved by Governors	TBC
Review date	September 2027

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust - Company Number: 7743523
Registered Office: 1st Floor, Loxley House, Riverside Business Park, Tottle Road, Nottingham NG2 1RT

Our School Mission

We Believe, We Succeed and We Soar

Christ is at the centre of St. Mary's as we strive to nurture and care for our community and encourage them to Believe, Succeed and Soar. Through God's love, we support our pupils in recognising their God given gifts, strengthening their work as missionary disciples.

*'Do little things with great love'
St Therese of Lisieux*

The mission of St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy is that of Jesus Christ; to build a teaching and learning community where we show due regard for the development and understanding of the uniqueness and dignity of each person. At St Mary's, each child is valued as a unique individual, a child of God, made in the image of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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 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
- Consultation with school governors

Implementation and Review of Policy

Implementation of the policy will take place after final consultation with the Governors in Advent Term 1. This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Head teacher, RSE Coordinator, the Governing Body and Staff. The next review date is September 2027.

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 RSHE curriculum will also be published on the school's website for the consultation period and shared via Arbor. The curriculum is shared with parents termly, prior to the RSHE 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". 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." 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 Requirement

It is a legal requirement to teach those aspects of RSHE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum in 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 Holy Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation. 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, is placed firmly within the context of relationship as it is there that sexuality grows and develops. RSHE 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.

Objectives

To develop the following **attitudes and virtues**:

- 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 our bodies
- responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on 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 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

Curriculum

Inclusion, 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 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

The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, pregnancy, maternity, sex, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation or whether they are looked-after children.

RSHE Content

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.

Life to the Full

The Life to the Full programme is based on the structure of 'A Model Catholic RSE Curriculum' by the Catholic Education Service. This model curriculum was highlighted as a work of good practice by the Department for Education so we therefore have confidence that the programme will be fit for purpose in supporting the growth and development of our pupils.

Life to the Full is much more than a series of lessons. It is an entire platform of creative resources that will engage, inform and inspire our children and, indeed, you as parents. This includes interactive video content, story-based activities, employing a wide range of teaching tools, original worship music and an accompanying programme of classroom prayers.

The core themes are:

- Created and Loved by God. This theme explores the individual.

As Christians, we know that we should love ourselves because we are made in the image and likeness of God. This theme helps children to understand the importance and necessity of valuing oneself in forming good personal relationships.

- Created to Love Others. This explores the individual's relationship with others. God is love and we are created out of love and for love. This theme helps pupils learn about God's command to love, and understand that love is the basis of all Christian morality.

- Created to Live in Community. This explores the individual's relationship with the wider world.

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 imitating 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.

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.

Please refer to the school website which provides further information about the Ten: Ten Curriculum programme coverage, content and resources for suggested use.

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. 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.

Assessment

Assessment is carried out by the class teacher and RSHE coordinator. 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 and Parent/Staff/Pupil/Governor/Pupil Voice are utilised within the annual monitoring cycle.

Responsibilities

Responsibility for the specific RSHE programme lies with the Headteacher and the RSHE Coordinator. 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 between staff, other adults and pupils. They will also contribute 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 RSHE. 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'. 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.

Governors

- consult with the school's Headteacher and RSHE 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

The Governing body and Foundation Governors recognise their responsibility to ensure the RSHE curriculum reflects the Church's teaching. The school's link Governor for RSHE is Hayley Pearson.

Headteacher

The Headteacher 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.

RSHE Coordinator

The RSHE coordinator and Headteacher 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

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.

Staff training needs are consulted annually and the Headteacher ensures that training needs are met. Resources and training are 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 relevant staff regularly attend training sessions offered.

Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents/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. Therefore, the school will support parents and carers by providing material to be shared with their children at home if appropriate, provide training opportunities for 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 are invited to view the material in more details should they wish to through our online parent portal.

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 the school 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 Headteacher. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning.

Safeguarding and Sensitivity

Relationship with Other Policies and Curriculum Subjects

This policy supports and complements a wide range of other policies including behaviour, anti-bullying, SEND, Teaching and Learning, Safeguarding, Science, Computing and Online Safety and Religious Education. Learning about RSHE is taught in a meaningful, relevant context using a cross-curricular context. Learning about RSHE in other curriculum areas will link to/complement learning in those areas identified in the overall coverage document.

Children's Questions

We aim to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSHE can take place. We strive 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. 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.

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, notes are recorded on CPOMs and safeguarding procedures are closely followed. See the Safeguarding Policy for more information.