

# Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

## St Mary's Horsforth Catholic Voluntary Academy



"Happy together in God's family,  
we love, grow and learn."

**Approved by:**

Aoibheann Kelly-  
Edwards

**Date:** November 2021

**Last reviewed on:**

September 2023

**Next review due by:**

September 2025

**The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors to share this commitment.**

# Happy together in God's family,

Happy together in God's family because we enjoy life and we are working together with family, friends, staff and the parish to make St. Mary's best place to learn and grow into responsible people of God.

## we love,

We love because we care for each other, we are gentle and help each other, we respect each other, we forgive each other and work for the common good of all

## grow

We grow physically, in our faith, in our attitudes and relationships and in our understanding.  
  
We want to make the most of all our God given talents.

## and learn.

We learn about ourselves, relationships and our faith.  
  
We learn the skills and knowledge that we will need to take a full active part in our community.

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their aims and their approach to Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) at St Mary's Horsforth Catholic Voluntary Academy.

The following consultation has taken place:

- School Council and Mini Vinnie group discussion with RSE lead and Head
- Consultation with parents
- Review of RSE curriculum content with all staff
- Consultation with school governors

### Implementation and Review of the policy

This policy was reviewed and updated in September 2023 and will be reviewed every 2 years by the Headteacher, RSE Co-coordinator, the Academy Council and staff. The next review date is September 2025.

### Dissemination

This policy will be given to all members of the Governing Body, and all teaching and nonteaching members of staff. Copies of the document will be available to all parents through the school's prospectus and a copy is available in the school office. Details of the content of the RSE curriculum will also be published on the St Mary's Horsforth Catholic Voluntary Academy school website.



## 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”<sup>1</sup>. 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.”<sup>2</sup> This would include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

## Defining Sex Education

At St Mary’s Horsforth Catholic Voluntary Academy, we have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. We ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and – drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science - how a baby is conceived and born.

At St Mary’s Horsforth Catholic Voluntary Academy, we do not teach children about sexual intercourse. Sexual intercourse is not part of the statutory primary curriculum. In Year 6, the session “Making Babies – Part 2” which covers this is omitted from classroom teaching. This session can be omitted without detracting from the journey of the overall programme. Access to a separate parent only version of “Making Babies- Part 2” is provided to allow parents the opportunity to introduce these matters at their own time and choosing. This lesson upholds and supports the teaching of the Catholic Church on sex and marriage whilst also discussing other types of relationships.

## Statutory Curriculum Requirements

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.

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.

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## Rationale

***‘I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL’ (Jn.10.10)***

We teach relationships and sex education because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity; Father, Son and

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<sup>1</sup> 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

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

Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation. This communion of divine love reveals that the desire for human relationships is God-given. Human beings are created to be relational, created to love and to be loved just as God is love and essentially relational. Catholic schools engage in relationships education not only because it is in the context of relationships that the human person grows and develops, but because God, who is love, desires that the world becomes a community of love.<sup>3</sup>

Our belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God underpins education in a Catholic school. As a consequence, every human person, gender and sexuality are seen as gifts from God, reflect God's beauty, and participate in the divine creativity.

Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales and as advocated by the DfE RSE 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 RSE will be in accordance with the Church's moral teaching and be at the service of human flourishing through the explicit teaching of the virtues. It will emphasise the central importance of the family and marriage 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 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: love, patience, gratitude, courage, honesty, respect, forgiveness, courtesy and justice, resilience, confidence, determination.

## **Aims of RSE and the mission statement**

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. Furthermore, our school aims state that we will 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. 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"<sup>4</sup> which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

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<sup>3</sup> Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: *Lumen gentium*, article 1, Second Vatican Council.

<sup>4</sup> Gravissimum Educationis 1

## Content and Outcomes

### Content

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 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;

### Outcomes

#### Inclusion and differentiated learning

We will ensure RSE 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. (In looking at these questions, it is important to draw links to the school's inclusion policy).



## 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.

## Resources

At St Mary's Horsforth Catholic Primary School, we are following the Ten Ten programme 'Life to the full' which is based on 'A Model Catholic RSE Curriculum' by the Catholic Education Service which was highlighted as a work of good practice by the Department for Education. 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 children and their parents. This programme includes interactive video content, story-based activities and employs a wide range of teaching tools, original worship music and an accompanying programme of classroom prayers.

## Broad Content of RSE at St Mary's

The programme adopts a spiral curriculum approach so that as a child goes through the programme year-after-year, the learning will develop and grow, with each stage building on the last.

Three aspects of RSE - 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 and sex curriculum.

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

Our programme will cover EYFS, KS1 and KS2 and is based on three core themes within which there will be broad overlap. It is adaptable to the age and ability of the pupils.

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.

Year group breakdown of programme:

### **Module One: Created and Loved by God**

In these sessions, we explore:

**EYFS-** In this unit, children learn that we are created individually to God as part of his creation plan, that we are all God's children and are special and our bodies were created by God, and we are good. We can give thanks to God!

**Key Stage One** – Children learn that we are uniquely made by a loving God, that we have differences and similarities (including physical differences between boys and girls), key information about staying physically healthy, understanding feelings and emotions, including strong feelings such as anger, and the cycle of life from birth to old age. In an age-appropriate way, children will be encouraged to notice similarities and celebrate differences between girls and boys on physical, emotional, and spiritual levels. At St Mary's Horsforth Catholic Voluntary Academy, Year 1 children will be covering the optional section for discussing external body parts (genitalia).

**Lower Key Stage Two** – This unit covers understanding differences, respecting our bodies, puberty and changing, strategies to support emotional wellbeing including practicing thankfulness, and the development of pupils understanding of life before birth.

In Year 4, pupils will look at the word 'puberty' and learn how puberty is part of God's plan to help us love others more. Pupils will use the correct terminology for genitalia relating to the discussion on puberty and explore some of the specific physical and emotional changes that will take place for boys and girls over the coming years. Pupils are told that during puberty girls start their periods.

**Upper Key Stage Two** – appreciation of physical and emotional differences, a more complex understanding of physical changes in girl and boys' bodies, body image, strong emotional feelings, the impact of the internet and social media on emotional well-being, a more nuanced and scientific understanding of life in the womb and how babies are made, and menstruation.

### **Module Two: Created to Love Others**

In these sessions we explore:

**EYFS** – In this Unit, children will be building on the understanding that we have been created out of love and for love, this Module explores how we take this calling into our family, friendships and relationships, and teaches strategies for developing healthy relationships and keeping safe



**Key Stage One** – In the Unit ‘Personal Relationships’, children are taught to identify the Special People in their lives who they love and can trust, how to cope with various social situations and dilemmas, and the importance of saying sorry and forgiveness within relationships. In the Unit ‘Keeping Safe’, we explore the risks of being online by incorporating the ‘Smartie the Penguin’ resources from Childnet, the difference between good and bad secrets, and teaching on physical boundaries (incorporating the PANTS resource the NSPCC).

**Lower Key Stage Two** – The sessions here help children to develop a more complex appreciation of different family structures and there are activities and strategies to help them develop healthy relationships with family and friends; here, they are also taught simplified Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques for managing thoughts, feelings and actions. Once again, for the ‘Keeping Safe’ unit, there are some excellent NSPCC resources, as well as teaching on bullying and abuse through a series of animated stories.

**Upper Key Stage Two** – The sessions for UKS2 in the ‘Personal Relationships’ module aim to equip children with strategies for more complex experiences of relationships and conflict; this includes sessions that help children to identify and understand how to respond to spoken and unspoken pressure, the concept of consent and some practical demonstrations of this, and further teaching on how our thoughts and feelings have an impact on how we act.

In Year 6, the session “Making Babies – Part 2” which covers sexual intercourse is omitted from classroom teaching. Access to a separate parents-only version of “Making Babies- Part 2” is provided direct to allow parents giving them the opportunity to introduce these matters at their own time and choosing.

### **Module Three: Created to Live in Community**

This explores the individual’s relationship with the wider world. Pupils across **all key stages** explore how human beings are relational by nature and are called to love others in the wider community through service, through dialogue and through working for the Common Good. In the first Unit, Religious Understanding, the story sessions help children to develop a concept of the Trinity. In subsequent sessions, we apply this religious understanding to real-world situations, such as the community we live in, and through exploring the work of charities which work for the Common Good.

### **How pupils’ learning in RSE will be assessed**

There is a pre and post assessment task for each unit which is designed taking into account the age and stage of the children. Teachers will use these tasks to track and monitor pupil outcomes.

### **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. Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children’s learning.



There is no right to withdraw from statutory Relationships and Health Education nor from the sex education that is taught as part of national curriculum science. However, parents continue to have the **right to withdraw** their children from the school's provision for sex education that is in addition to national curriculum science. 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 RSE 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 RSE. 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 and sex education programme lays with Mrs S Hurley (Headteacher) and the RSE and RE Lead (Mrs L Wray). However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE 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'<sup>5</sup>

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.

## **Other roles and responsibilities regarding RSE**

### **Governors**

- draw up the RSE policy, in consultation with parents and teachers;

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<sup>5</sup> CES Checklist for External Speakers to Schools, 2016

- ensure that the policy is available to parents;
- ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g. SEN, 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 RSE within PSHE.

### **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.

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### **RSE Co-Ordinator**

The co-ordinator with the 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 RSE and the provision of in-service training.

### **All Staff**

RSE 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 RSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSE. All teaching staff completed statutory training of RSE and additional training on the TENTEN programme in July 2020 and this was revisited in January 2023. The Induction Programme for new staff has been amended to include arrangements for future staff appointed after this date to complete training. 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 RSE 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 (Anti-Bullying policy & Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy) 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 RSE in PSHE classes will complement learning in those areas identified in the RSE audit.

### **Children's questions**

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE 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 RSE. 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 RSE 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 (RSE) 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 RSE takes place. Effective RSE 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 RSE 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, 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 of school, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

The RSE Co-ordinator will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils work and assessments at regular intervals. The programme will be evaluated biannually by means of a parent questionnaire, needs assessment given to pupils, and by discussion with pupils and staff. The results of the evaluation should be reported to these groups of interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.