



# **RSE POLICY**

**2024 - 2025**

**POLICY FOR RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION**

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child and we believe that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is an integral part of this education. It is in this context that we commit ourselves, in partnership with parents<sup>1</sup>, to provide children and young people with a “positive and prudent [relationships and] sexual education”<sup>2</sup> which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in the Catholic vision of education and the human person.

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their aims and their approach to RSE in the school.

### **Consultation**

- We have consulted with the school governors
- We have consulted with parents/carers
- We have reviewed the RSE curriculum content with the school staff

### **Implementation and Review of Policy**

Implementation of the policy will take place in the Summer term 2022 and replaces the previous RSE policy.

It will be published on our website and replaces the previous RSE policy.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Headteacher, RSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and Staff.

### **Dissemination**

The policy will be given to all members of the Governing Body and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Details of the policy and content of the RSE curriculum will be published on the school's web site. Copies of the policy will be available to all registered parents on request and a copy is available in the school office.

### **Statutory Curriculum Requirements**

The statutory framework that surrounds education about human relationships largely falls within three key areas.

- The National Curriculum (2014)
- Statutory Guidance: 'Sex and Relationships Education Guidance' (2000)
- The Children's Act (2004)

The highlighted areas are pertinent and apply to our school:

State Funded Maintained Schools   Academies and Free Schools

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<sup>1</sup> Parents is used to refer to carers, guardians and parents.

<sup>2</sup> *Gravissimum Educationis* 1

Whole Curriculum	Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which: -promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; -prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.	
Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education	Department for Education: all schools should make provision for PSHE, drawing on best practice. Schools are free to develop their own PSHE programme to reflect the needs of their pupils.	
Sex and Relationships Education	Statutory for secondary aged children to have sex education that includes HIV, Aids and other sexually transmitted infections	
Sex and Relationships Education Guidance	Any school that provides RSE has a statutory duty to have due regard to Sex and Relationships Education Guidance DfEE 2000	
National Curriculum	Statutory sex education forms part of the science programmes of study across Key Stages 1-3.	
Sex and Relationships Education Policy	DfEE Guidance (2000) states that all schools should have an up to date RSE policy available for inspection and on request for parents or carers.	SRE policy is advisable but not compulsory

In Catholic education, the reasons for our teaching of RSE go further.

### **Aim of Catholic Relationships and Sex Education**

The aim of Catholic RSE is rooted in a particular context, that Catholic Christianity is a living tradition of lifelong learning in the knowledge and love of God. This learning is not additional to learning about ourselves and our relationships with others and the world, but constitutive of such learning because it treats of God and of all things, in their relationship to God as their beginning and their end, their origin and destiny.<sup>3</sup>

*'God is love and anyone who lives in love lives in God and God lives in him.'* (1 Jn. 4:16)

*'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.'* (Jn.10:10)

*'God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.'* (Gen. 1:27)

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q.1, ad2; q.1, a. 7. C.

We teach RSE precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. This communion of love at the heart of God reveals that the desire for fulfilling and flourishing human relationships, is God-given. 'Communities are brought into being by the participation of men and women, responding to the divine impulse to love and to be loved – which was implanted by the God who created them.'<sup>4</sup> In short, human beings are not simply created to be relational, but created to love and to be loved just as God is love.

The belief that God became man in Christ animates our approach to RSE. The Incarnation endows the human form with an extraordinary dignity and shows that our relationship with our own bodies is not casual but infused with the Holy Spirit<sup>5</sup>. Humanity is called to embrace Christ's invitation to follow him, because the encounter with Christ gives life a decisive direction – gives life to the full.

The belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God underpins our approach to RSE. We believe that everyone possesses a 'basic dignity that comes from God, not from any human quality or accomplishment, not from race, or gender, age or economic status'.<sup>6</sup> As a consequence, not only is every member of the school community worthy of great respect but gender and sexuality are seen as God's gift, reflect God's beauty, and share 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. The school will aim to ensure, through a faith motivated person centred approach that all pupils, appropriate to their age, level of maturity and developmental needs, develop the necessary attitudes and values, the personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding to ensure that they have the capacity to make sound judgements, good choices and enjoy relationships based on love, mutual respect, dignity and responsibility free from any abuse or exploitation and to accept their own and others' sexuality in positive ways and as a gift essential to their personal identity.

### **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 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, mercy, compassion, faithfulness, temperance (chastity), fortitude and prudence.

Our approach acknowledges that all pupils have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from and support will be provided to help pupils deal with different sets of values.

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<sup>4</sup> The Common Good in Education, p. 6, Catholic Education Service 1997.

<sup>5</sup> 'Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received him from God. You are not your own property ... That is why you should use your body for the glory of God' 1 Cor. 6:19-20

<sup>6</sup> The Common Good in Education, p. 6.

## Defining Relationships and Sex Education

In RSE children will learn about their spiritual, social, moral, emotional and physical development in ways appropriate to their age, level of maturity and developmental needs. We promote and teach the importance of love for relationships, including love's sexual expression in marriage. The teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health will be placed in the context of Catholic Church teaching.

The DFE guidance defines RSE as "lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage and family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex and sexuality"<sup>7</sup>. The DFE identifies three main elements: "attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding"<sup>8</sup>.

## Objectives

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

- reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility;
- respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others;
- joy in the goodness of the created world and their own bodily natures;
- responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others;
- recognising and valuing their own sexual identity and that of others;
- celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love;
- recognising the importance of marriage and family life;
- fidelity in relationships.

To develop the following **personal and social skills**:

- making sound judgements and good choices which have integrity and 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.

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<sup>7</sup> Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfEE, 2000

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*

### 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.

### **Entitlement and Delivery**

#### **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). 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 link to/complement learning in those areas identified in the RSE audit.

#### **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.

#### **Broad content of RSE**

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.

#### **Integrated curriculum**

The RSE programme will promote Catholic values and virtues in accordance with Church teaching and ensure that pupils are offered 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. We will ensure that pupils have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals. ***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.***

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. Governors 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. (See also Sex and Relationship Guidance, 4.5 'Dealing with questions' 0116/2000, Department for Education and Employment, July 2000 for more detail)

### **RSE Programme – 'Life to the Full'**

At St. Vincent's, RSE is delivered through the scheme, 'Life to the Full', which is approved by Salford Diocese. It is delivered by school staff each term. External agencies and healthcare professionals may also have an input, although always in line with our school ethos and the Church's teaching.

'Life to the Full' is a fully resourced Scheme of Work for Catholic primary schools which embraces and fulfils the new statutory curriculum. Taught with a spiral approach to learning, in which pupils will revisit the same topics at an age-appropriate stage through their school life, the programme includes teaching about personal health, physical and emotional wellbeing, strong emotions, private parts of the body, personal relationships, family structures, trusted adults, growing bodies, puberty, periods, life cycles, the dangers of social media, where babies come from, an understanding of the Common Good and living in the wider world. The entire teaching is underpinned with a religious understanding that our deepest identity is as a child of God - created chosen and loved by God. The programme is fully inclusive of all pupils and their families.

### **Teaching Strategies**

It is essential that we help children and young people develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about sex and relationships, in line with DCSF guidance. This is, of course, in line with their year group teaching from the programme. Whilst teaching, certain strategies are used in order to develop this confidence. These include –

[a] Creating ground rules – Creating a set of ground rules to help teachers create a safe environment in which they or pupils do not feel embarrassed or anxious about unintended or unexpected questions or comments from pupils.

[b] Distancing Techniques - Teachers avoid embarrassment and protect pupils' privacy by always depersonalising discussions.

[c] Dealing with questions – Teachers establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting.

[d] Discussion – discussion encourages learning and is enjoyed by pupils. Pupils take part in structured activities in which they can:

- draw on previous knowledge to develop more understanding;
- practise their social and personal skills;
- consider their beliefs and attitudes about different topics;

- reflect on their new learning;
- plan and shape future action.

[e] Reflecting - reflecting is crucial for learning as it encourages pupils to consolidate what they have learned and to form new understanding, skills and attitudes. Teachers will help pupils reflect on their learning by asking appropriate questions.

## **Assessment of Learning of RSE**

Pupils' learning of RSE will be assessed in RE although knowledge and understanding of growing and developing (physical development) will be assessed through Science.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Parents**

Parents are the primary educators of their children. The school seeks to support and not replace them in this task. We recognise that parents sometimes experience and express difficulty in discussing RSE with their children. Support, understanding and advice will be offered to parents to deal with sensitive issues they may need to address. Parents 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.

### **Parents will be consulted about this policy.**

The school will also provide parents with opportunities for consultation on the RSE programme including during the process of its review and evaluation. They will be able to view the resources used by the school in the RSE programme. Our aim is that every parent will have full confidence in the school's RSE policy and programme.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RSE 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 head teacher. The school will support parents by providing material to help the children with their learning.

### **Governors**

The Foundation Governors of Catholic schools are appointed by the Bishop in order to promote and safeguard the Catholic character of the school. Governors will consult on the policy and approve the RSE policy in accordance with the Catholic character of the school and in line with other policies. Governors will ensure that the policy is made available to parents and ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children. Governors will provide an effective system for the monitoring and evaluation of the RSE policy, programme and resources used. Finally, governors will ensure that the RSE policy places RSE within PHSE and provides effective coverage of the relevant National Curriculum science orders.

**Headteacher**

The Headteacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, the Vicariate for Education and appropriate agencies.

**PHSE / RSE Co-ordinator**

The co-ordinator with the head teacher has 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 Continuing Professional Development (CPD). (Supported by the curriculum deputy and DSL).

Responsibility for teaching the specific RSE programme lies with the class teachers.

The co-ordinator monitors the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by scrutinising examples of pupils work at regular intervals and conducting staff interviews.

The programme will be evaluated biannually by discussion with pupils, staff and parents.

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.

**Teachers of RSE**

All teachers should actively contribute to the guardianship of the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of their pupils as well as fostering academic progress. Teachers will be expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic character of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSE.

**All Staff**

RSE is a whole school issue. Every member of staff has a duty of care to uphold the dignity of all. 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 relationships between staff, other adults and pupils. They will also be contributing to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.

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.

**Outside Agencies and External Staff**

Support and guidance from outside agencies and health professionals will always complement the current RSE programme and never substitute or replace teacher led sessions. The school's leadership will inform any external visitor of the school's policy and Catholic character so they are clear about their role and responsibility when delivering a session in a Catholic context. Any visitor must adhere to our code of practice developed in

line with CES guidance 'Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools' and the diocesan protocol for visitors to Catholic schools.<sup>9</sup>

### **Safeguarding**

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues discussed in RSE. Children will 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. Where a teacher has any concerns they are required to follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

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Revised and adopted by the Governing Body

Date: 1 September 2024

Review Date: 1 September 2025

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<sup>9</sup> Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools, CES, Feb. 2011