Archdiocese of Liverpool

RELATIONSHIP AND SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY (PRIMARY) 2026

ST. JAMES', WHERE WE BELONG, BELIEVE AND ACHIEVE.

Date:	November 2026
Next review date:	November 2027

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with their Diocesan Schools' Service, pupils and their parents, and, where appropriate, Academy Trustees, set out their intentions about relationships, sex and health education (RSE). We set out our rationale for, and approach to relationships and sex education in the school.

RATIONALE

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

(Jn.10.10)

We are involved in relationships, sex and health 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) 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 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 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.

AIM OF RSHE 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 RSHE 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"[1] 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;
- 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**:

- develop the skills that form the building blocks of all positive relationships, from the very start of their education, to grow into kind, caring adults who have respect for others
- making sound judgements and good choices which have integrity, and which are respectful of the individual's commitments;

[1] *Gravissimum Educationis* 1

- 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;
- developing skills for managing difficult feelings in their friendships, like disappointment or anger.
- being patient, delaying gratification and learning to recognise the appropriate stages in the development of relationships, and how to love chastely;
- Develop skills to keep themselves and others safe, and to recognise and report risks and abuse, including online.
- Ability to assess risks and manage behaviours in order to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity.
- Develop skills to understand what counts as abusive behaviour and learn to trust their instincts about behaviour that doesn't feel right.
- Ability to understand about bullying, and that this can include the use of derogatory terms relating to sex, race, disability or sexual orientation.

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;
- Knowledge and strategies of who to speak to and what to do when they have concerns about themselves or others and the ability to be resilient when seeking help.
- Know and understand that being a victim of abuse is never the fault of the child.

CURRICULUM FOR RELATIONSHIP, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION

The Christian belief in the unique dignity of the human person, made in the image and likeness of God, forms the basis of all that we aim to teach the children about :-

- how to form loving relationships,
- how to understand the gift of human sexuality and
- how to care for the gift of their health and the health of others.

By combining these three areas in the subject of RSHE, we help the children to understand how to do this well. In the light of the knowledge that we are made in God's image and likeness, through the RSHE curriculum, we learn that we are made to know and love Him, and though this relationship, to love ourselves and then to love others. It is for this reason that the three areas of Relationship Education, Sex Education and Health Education are interrelated and should sit together in a well-planned and continuous curriculum.

Relationships Education

In a Catholic school, relationships education should be anchored in the understanding of Human dignity and the knowledge that we are all precious children of God – and therefore should be concerned with developing positive, respectful relationships with others. Because of the knowledge that we are known and loved by God, it should also equip children with the knowledge and of how to keep themselves - and others - safe, and how to recognise and report risks and abuse, including online. In light of this, we will teach children about boundaries, privacy, and children's rights over their own bodies and personal information. As precious children of God, it is essential that we teach children to recognise emotional, physical and sexual abuse in an age-appropriate and non-alarming way. Even very young children can be equipped to understand what counts as abusive behaviour and to trust their instincts about behaviour that doesn't feel right. In addition, in the light of human dignity, we will teach children to understand about bullying, and that this can include the use of derogatory terms relating to sex, race, disability or sexual orientation – and equip them with strategies of who they can talk to and what to do when they feel that something is wrong.

Sex Education

Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools, however it recommended by the DfE, that primaries teach sex education in years 5 and/or 6, in line with content about conception and birth, which forms part of the statutory national curriculum for science. The national curriculum for science includes subject content in related areas, such as the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals. In our Catholic school, we will ensure that all sex education is rooted in the Catholic church's teaching and will be placed firmly within the context of relationship - as it is there that

sexuality grows and develops and we commit to fostering an understanding in children that gender and sexuality are seen as God's gift, reflect God's beauty, and share in the divine creativity.
In Catholic schools, we believe that parents are the first educators of children and therefore – and in line with DfE Guidelines – we commit to consultation with our parents about the content of anything that will be taught within sex education. This process will include offering parents support in talking to their children about sex education and how to link this with what is being taught in school as well as advice about parents' right to request withdrawal from sex education.

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:
1. Review – SLT, Mis Mobbs (PSHE and RSE lead), including relevant national and local guidance.
2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.
4. Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their Relationship Sex and Health Education.
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and Ratified

We have developed our curriculum with recommendations from the Archdiocesan Education Department to ensure that they meet with Catholic Church teaching. At St. James, Relationship Sex Education (RSE) will be covered using the Archdiocesan recommended resource 'Journey In Love' 2020. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of our curriculum, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so they are fully informed and do not seek answers online. Relationship and Sex Education (RHSE) is taught both discretely and within the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum lessons. Some aspects of the RSHE curriculum may be touched upon in other lessons as it shares links with Religious Education, Computing, Science and Physical Education. Our RSHE will ensure that content is relevant to the age, experience and maturity of pupils.
The new statutory guidance for Relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:
• Families and people who care for me.
• Caring friendships.
• Respectful relationships.
• Online relationships.
• Being safe.
These areas of learning are taught within the context of 'family life' and could include married or single parent families, same sex parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents,

foster parents/carers amongst other structures, along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a support structure around them (for example: looked after children or young carers). As a school, we promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Our school environment uniformly applies values of inclusion and respect to all pupils and their families. All staff are proactive in promoting positive, respectful and safe relationships.

Health and Well-being education

In our Catholic school, we hold the belief that our bodies are gifts from God and as such, we are called to care for our health and for the health of others. In the light of this, we aim of teach children about health and wellbeing, to enable pupils to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing, to understand the links between physical and mental health, to recognise when things are not right in their own health or the health of others and to seek support when needed. We also commit to supporting pupils to develop strategies for self-regulation, perseverance and determination, even in the face of setbacks.

Inclusion and SEND

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. Teaching is developed to ensure these subjects are accessible for pupils with SEND and prepare pupils for adulthood, as set out in the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years. Pupils with specific challenges, whether of a physical or intellectual nature, will receive appropriately adapted teaching and support to enable them to develop mature knowledge, understanding and skills within their capacity. Teaching methods will be adapted to meet the varying needs of this group of pupils.

Equalities Obligations

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

Programme / Resources

In the provision and use of resources to teach the RSHE curriculum, the school is committed to:

- Promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching
- Ensuring that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSHE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues.
- Pupils will receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSHE. (It is important to understand that 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.)

- Ensuring that pupils have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.
- Ensure coverage of all statutory topics, recognising that young people can start developing healthy behaviour and relationship skills as soon as they start school.
- Ensure that the curriculum is carefully sequenced, so that pupils are supported and equipped with the knowledge to navigate different experiences in a positive way before they occur, and to prevent harms.
- Adopt an inclusive, well-sequenced RSHE curriculum, informed by meaningful engagement with pupils to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and engaging.

In order to achieve this and in line with Diocesan protocols, the school will follow the **Journey In Love** programme. We also supplement with materials from the PSHE association, NSPCC, CEOP, PolEd.

In our school we have agreed the following planning pathway for the delivery of the RSE.
Whole school overview.pdf
At St James, pupils are regularly assessed through ongoing formative assessment, including class discussions, questioning, group activities and reflection tasks. Teachers will assess pupils' understanding of key concepts, their ability to express their thoughts and opinions, and their capacity to apply their learning to real-life situations. Assessment will also enable teachers to monitor pupils' progress, identify and address misconceptions, and inform future planning to ensure teaching and learning meet pupils' needs. Pupil voice will also be gathered to ensure that our curriculum is meeting the needs of our children.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHING THE PROGRAMME

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme resides with
Miss Mobbs (PSHE and RSE lead), Mrs Gibbons and Miss Walsh (joint RE lead), SLT and all members of teaching staff.

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

The school will focus on building positive attitudes and skills, promoting healthy norms about relationships, including sexual relationships where relevant, and about health, including mental health. We will avoid language which might normalise harmful behaviour among young people – for example gendered language which might normalise male violence or stigmatise boys. Teaching should be responsive to the contextual safeguarding of the school and should be age appropriate and respectful of all children, including those who may have no familiarity with the topics under discussion. The school will also inform parents of any deviation from their published RSE policy in advance and share any relevant materials with them on request.

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 [2] which can be found here: External Speakers

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.

Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents (and other carers who stand in their place) are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children. Therefore, the school will support parents and carers by providing material to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help parents/carers to find out more. Parents/carers will be informed by letter/email 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 and carers can view a curriculum overview on the school website and learn more about the materials at the annual parental meeting (as a minimum). Should parents request to view individual lesson content, they should make contact with the school RSHE Lead who will make the necessary arrangements.

[2] CES Checklist for External Speakers to Schools, 2016

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

Parents continue to have ***the right to withdraw*** their children from Sex Education except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the headteacher, who will arrange for a meeting to take place to establish the elements of the curriculum from which the child is able to be withdrawn. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning. (It is important to note that the right to withdraw from Sex Education does not extend to Relationship and Health Education).

Please refer to the DfE's RSE and Health Education guidance, July 2025 p.6 for further details on the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw).

Other Roles and Responsibilities regarding RSHE

Governors -

- draw up 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., SEN, the Ethos of the school and Catholic Christian beliefs;
- ensure that the policy meets statutory requirements;
- 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.

Head teacher

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

RSHE Co-Ordinator/s

The co-ordinator/s 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 in-service training. *(They may be supported by the curriculum deputy and the member of staff with responsibility for child protection).*

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 RSHE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSHE. All staff have been included in the development of this policy and all staff should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them.

Relationship to other policies and curriculum subjects

This RSHE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHE framework, with the statutory guidance on RSE and Health education comprising the large majority of this framework. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents (for example, Bullying Policy, Safeguarding Policy etc). The Science curriculum contains elements of human development and health that link to RSE and Health Education and these are taught in a sequential way to enable a fuller understanding of the topics.

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.

Some pupils may ask questions about topics which go beyond the curriculum content. These questions will be handled with sensitivity, ensuring that the pupil feels heard and supported in an appropriate way. We recognise that unanswered questions may lead pupils to turn to inappropriate sources of information, including online. The school will offer individualised support to parents in dealing with responses to such questions and signposting to support services where needed.

Safeguarding

Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSHE takes place. Effective RSHE will provide opportunities for discussion, and such discussion may well lead to

disclosure of a safeguarding issue. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately following the school's safeguarding procedures.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The RSHE Co-ordinator will monitor the provision of the programme in a considered and planned way.

The programme will be evaluated annually by means of:

- pupil voice
- discussion with pupils, staff and parents.

Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

A consultation process has taken place as follows:

- *pupil focus groups / pupil voice/ school council*
- *review of RSHE curriculum content with staff and pupils*
- *consultation with school governors /dioceses*

Implementation and Review of Policy

Implementation of the policy will take place after consultation with the Governors in the autumn term.

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Head teacher, RSHE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and Staff. The next review date is November 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. Details of the content of the RSHE curriculum will also be published on the school's web site.