



ST JAMES'

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy

Date of Adoption	February 2024
Date of Review	February 2025

The following consultation has taken place:

- Information shared with parents / carers in early 2020 for consultation
- Review of RSE curriculum content and training with staff
- Discussions with sets of pupils
- Consultation with wider school community (school nurse)
- Consultation with school governors

Dissemination

The 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 RSE curriculum will also be published on the school's web site.

St James' Mission Statement:

*To ensure everyone within our school **family** achieves their full potential,
to encourage learning and development through **faith**,
and to strive for **excellence***

Rationale:

At St James' Catholic High School, we have a duty to support parents in their endeavours to give sound relationship education to their children. The Relationships and Sex Education, at St James', must ensure that pupils consider the moral aspects of relationship education and are encouraged to develop loving and caring relationships.

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

(Jn.10.10)



We are involved in relationships and sex education precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. The belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in a Catholic school. Our approach to RSE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals and our school values of faith, family and excellence.

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. RSE, 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, RSE will be firmly embedded in the PSHCE 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. 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 and support will be provided to help pupils deal with different sets of values.

The policy has considered the Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges carried out by Ofsted and published in June 2021.

Defining Relationship and Sex Education

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, sexuality and sexual health". 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. The DFE identifies three main elements: "attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding".

Statutory Curriculum Requirements

The Department for Education states that '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 and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. They also make Health Education compulsory in all schools except independent schools. Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHCE) continues to be compulsory in independent schools.' However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

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.



Aims

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. In our school 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”. Which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.
- To help pupils learn the value of family life, marriage and stable loving relationships for the nurture of children and the value of respect, love and care incorporating the teachings of the Church with regards to relationships

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.

To know and understand:

- The Church's teaching on relationships and the nature and meaning of sexual love;
- The Church's teaching on marriage and the importance of marriage and family life;



- The centrality and importance of virtue in guiding human living and loving;
- The physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty;
- The facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation;
- How to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception;
- How to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

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.

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.

Content and Delivery of RSE

The main areas of delivery of RSE are RE, PSHCE and Science although some other subject areas make very important contributions, especially those of English, Drama, PE and Geography.

Relationships and Sex in Curriculum Areas

Year Group	Content Covered
7	Science Puberty and emotional changes Male and female structures Menstruation Mechanics of fertilisation Pregnancy and development of the foetus Birth and labour Passage of substances through the placenta PSHCE Changing bodies - Physical and emotional changes Healthy inside and out - Body image and self esteem Where we come from - Reproduction and fertility



	<p>Family and friends - Understanding relationships and dealing with conflict My life on screen - Effects of digital technology on ourselves and others Living responsibly - Social responsibility and respect for self and others</p>
8	<p>PSHCE Appreciating Difference - Equality and being worthy of love Feelings - Attraction and unions Before I was Born - Conception to birth Tough Relationships - Prejudice and discrimination Think Before you Share - The social, personal and legal consequences of sharing images of a sexual nature Wider World - Exploring issues of prejudice, discrimination and homophobic bullying</p>
9	<p>Religious Education Catholic Social Teaching The Sacrament of Marriage Sexual relationships outside of marriage Creation of life PSHCE Love people, use things - Objectification and the impact of casual attitudes towards sex In control of my choices Making informed and considered decisions about intimacy - Fertility and contraception Methods for managing conception and discuss - how they uphold or contravene God's plan for sex. Marriage - Different types of committed relationships One hundred percent - Consent and respect Rights and responsibilities - Physical consent, sexual exploitation and human rights.</p>
10	<p>Religious Education Sanctity of life Catholic teaching on moral issues (including abortion and euthanasia) Science Cell specialisation - sperm cells and egg cells Sexual and asexual reproduction Embryo screening in relation to genetic disorders In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) Hormones in human reproduction Contraception methods The use of hormones to treat infertility Sexually transmitted diseases (HIV and Gonorrhoea) PSHCE Authentic Freedom - Peer pressure and personal freedom Self-Image - Body image (positive and negative) and self confidence Beliefs, Values and Attitudes - Understanding beliefs and core values Parenthood - Being a parent, including love, dedication, obligation, commitment, sacrifice responsibility Pregnancy / Abortion - Stages of life in the womb and the abortion Abuse - Different types of abuse (physical, emotional, domestic and neglect) Solidarity - Principles of 'integral ecology', where dignity, human rights and concern for the poor are intertwined with a concern for nature, the environment and the whole of creation</p>
11	<p>Religious Education Sanctity of life Catholic teaching on moral issues (including abortion and euthanasia) Science Cell specialisation - sperm cells and egg cells Sexual and asexual reproduction Embryo screening in relation to genetic disorders In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)</p>



<p>Hormones in human reproduction Contraception methods The use of hormones to treat infertility Sexually transmitted diseases (HIV and Gonorrhoea) PSHCE Self-Worth - respect themselves and others, and the role God can play within that Addiction - overcoming severe drug addiction through the help of family, community, responsibility and faith Eating Disorders - gaining insight into oneself as the key to well-being Birth Control - fertility as a precious gift to be protected, nurtured and valued and reflection on how love, sex and procreation are all intrinsically linked - because that's how God intended it to be Pornography - how it affects people's behaviour, how it affects the way people think about themselves, others and their relationships STIs - how the reality of STIs connects to deeper questions about sexual choices and consequences, and how to rethink behaviour that causes harm Coercive Control - what is meant by coercive control and how this type of abusive relationship can develop</p>
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Assessment

Assessment is an important part of RSE education. All students will be assessed both formatively in class, and via a Google Forms assessment which will gather evidence of their confidence in each topic covered in line with the new assessment schedule in PSHCE.

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 and workshops to help parents/carers to find out more. Parents/carers will be informed via the website 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 before this policy is ratified by the governors. They will be consulted at every stage of the development of the RSE 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. We use the Ten Ten resources 'Life to the full' and parents can access these 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 RSE programme to meet their child's needs.

As per DfE guidance; 'Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE but there is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.'

We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed and therefore any parental request to withdraw a child from sex education will be discussed with the parent but the parents' right to withdraw their child will always be respected. Parents will be able to withdraw their child (following discussion with the school) from any or all aspects of Sex Education, other than those which are part of the science curriculum, up to and until three terms before the age of 16.

If a pupil is excused from sex education, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

'There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.' (DfE, June 2019).



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 (in secondary schools/academies relating to forced-marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion, the age of consent and legislation relating to equality). 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.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lies with the teachers of RE, PSHCE and Science.

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 'Protocol for Visitors to Catholic 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.

Other Roles and Responsibilities Regarding RSE

Governors

- Draw up the RSE 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 our Christian beliefs;
- Ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children;
- Ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHCE.

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.



PSHCE Co-ordinator

The co-ordinator with the Headteacher 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.

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.

Relationship to Other Policies and Curriculum Subjects

This RSE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHCE framework. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's Behaviour Policy and the Safeguarding 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.

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 matters 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.

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. In this case staff may address these queries at a different time or seek further advice from the PSHCE Co-ordinator. Any safeguarding concerns would be reported as per our school's agreed protocol.

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 safeguarding lead.

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 safeguarding 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, the Headteacher, 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 at regular intervals. The programme will be evaluated annually by means of questionnaires / response sheets/needs assessment given to pupils, and / or 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.

Monitoring and evaluation by teaching staff takes place regularly as part of the PSHCE course evaluations and training and also through RE and Science departmental meetings. All new staff are expected to attend training on delivery of RSE. Where staff feel uncomfortable about delivering a particular topic support is given by another member of staff where possible. Verbal feedback is sought from pupils, which is in conjunction with the teacher feedback drives the changes made to our policy. This system of monitoring, evaluation and review works well and leads to quality modules which are constantly updated

Appendix A – From DfE Statutory Guidance 2019

By the end of secondary school:

Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary:

Families

Pupils should know

That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.



What marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.

Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into. The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.

The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.

How to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.

Respectful relationships, including friendships

Pupils should know

The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship.

Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.

How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice).

That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs.

About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.

That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.

What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.

The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.

Online and media

Pupils should know:

About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online.

Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them.

What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.

The impact of viewing harmful content.

That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners.

That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail.

How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.

Being safe

Pupils should know



The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships.

How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online).

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Pupils should know

How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship.

That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.

The facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause.

That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressuring others.

That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.

The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available.

The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage.

That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help).

How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing.

About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.

How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.

How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

The Law

Pupils should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- Marriage
- Consent, including the age of consent
- Violence against women and girls
- Online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- Pornography
- Abortion
- Sexuality
- Gender identity
- Substance misuse
- Violence and exploitation by gangs
- Extremism/radicalisation
- Criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- Hate crime
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)



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