



**St Mary's Catholic
Primary School
Bognor Regis**

**Relationship, Sex and Health
Education (RSHE) Policy**

Approved: November 2024

Date of next Review: November 2026

1. School Mission Statement

“We journey and grow together in the footsteps of Jesus Christ”.

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions about relationship sex and health education (RSHE). We set our rationale for, and approach to RSHE in the school.

Looking through the lens of our school Mission Statement, Catholic values and ethos we believe, that by working together we can support our children to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them, where we serve each other with love and respect.

St Mary’s School aims to provide a stimulating and relevant curriculum, where children learn and achieve together, so that each individual can reach their full potential within a safe environment where there is respect and trust amongst everyone.

We acknowledge that Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)¹ and Citizenship, is embedded within “Relationships and Sex Education” (RSHE) to nurture human wholeness as a part of the integral physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils.

The policy has been written in line with the DfE Relationships Education and Health Education statutory curriculum requirements² and the programme’s chosen to deliver this content have been chosen carefully to both teach the statutory curriculum and reflect the Catholic ethos and nature of St Mary’s school.

¹ PSHE <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-social-health-and-economic-education-pshe/personal-social-health-and-economic-pshe-education>

² RSHE Statutory guidance; 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-RSHE-and-health-education>

RSHE is part of the mission of our Catholic schools to educate the whole person. It should be carried out as part of a holistic education which seeks to form, as well as inform, young people in preparation for adult life.

Catholic schools must base their policies on the model CES³ policy and follow the guidance issued by them.

2. Implementation and Review of Policy

Implementation of the policy took place after consultation with the Governors in the Autumn term 2020. This policy will be reviewed in 2 years'-time by the Head of the School, the RSHE Leader, the Governing Body and Staff.

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 prospectus and a copy is available in the school office.

Details of the content of the RSHE curriculum will be also published on the school's website.

3. Defining Relationship Sex and Health 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"⁴. It is about the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of themselves as sexual beings, 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."⁵

This will include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

³ CES Policy model

<https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/schools/relationship-sex-education>

⁴ Sex and Health Education; p.4

⁵ Sex and Health Education; p. 19

4. Statutory curriculum requirements

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSHE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science.

However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSHE go further.

5. Rationale

'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 RSHE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals.

At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation. 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.

All RSHE will be in accordance with the Church's moral and social 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.

6. Impact of RSHE: Values and Virtues

Our programme enshrines Catholic values relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life.

We are committed to promote and develop essential virtues and attitudes in responding to God's call, which are truly Gospel inspired; such as: love, faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, truth, prudence, honesty, justice,

respect for the dignity of every human being, integrity, mercy, compassion, reconciliation and freedom.

7. Aims of RSHE and the Mission statement

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child and we believe that RSHE is an integral part of this education in our diverse and inclusive school community, where every child is welcome regardless of their faith. 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.

In partnership with parents, we commit ourselves to provide children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education" ⁶ together with accurate knowledge and understanding about sexuality and relationships in the light of Catholic teaching which is appropriate to the age, cognitive and psychological development, spiritual maturity, gender, ethnicity and ability of the child.

8. Objectives

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

- reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility
- 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;

⁶ *Gravissimum Educationis 1* (Declaration on Christian Education, 1965);
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html

- 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.
- keeping themselves safe from harm and to protect themselves from exploitation
- discerning and making choices in the light of the teaching of the Catholic church

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;

9. Outcomes

Inclusion and differentiated learning

We will ensure RSHE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own 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 2010⁷ 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 RSHE

Three aspects of RSHE - attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills will be provided in three inter-related ways: the whole school / ethos dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific relationships and sex curriculum.

Programme/Resources

At St Mary's we follow the Ten Ten Life to the Full Plus⁸ curriculum programme approved and recommended by Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. These resources are accessible for the parents through the Parent Portal and log in information is provided by the school.

Teaching resources and strategies include: discussion, role play, video clips and animations, circle times, drawing, group work and reflection. There will be a short assessment activity at the start and the end of each unit in order to assess learning.

Any additional resources used, in the form of books and stories, are approved by the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.

⁷ The Equality Act 2010

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7e3237ed915d74e33f0ac9/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

⁸ Ten Ten Life to the Full online resources <https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/>

Parents and Carers

“The overall education of children is a “most serious duty” and at the same time a “primary right” of parents. This is not just a task or a burden, but an essential and inalienable right that parents are called to defend and of which no one may claim to deprive them”.

Amoris Laetitia 84

Parents have the prime responsibility in teaching their children how to build healthy, loving relationships, and our Catholic School plays a vital part in supporting parents.

Without structured relationship education children may seek information from unreliable sources that could negatively impact their understanding of love and relationships.

Parents will be consulted during the process of monitoring, review and evaluation.

Support, understanding and advice will be offered to parents/carers to deal with sensitive issue they may need to address by:

- providing material to be shared with their children at home
- workshops to help parents/carers to find out more
- parents/carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSHE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children’s learning
- The sensitive session in Upper Key Stage Two: ‘Created and loved by God’- “Making babies” is the only one reference sexual intimacy and it is discussed within the contexts of a heterosexual marriage, in a way which is sensitive to the different needs, circumstances and family backgrounds of individual pupils in each class.
- Parents will be invited beforehand and welcomed by the staff at school to view the material and ask any questions.

Parents continue to have **the right to withdraw** their children from RSHE except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders.

Relevant documentation:

- *Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education*⁹ page 17;
- *Guidance on the right of withdrawal from Religious Education and/or collective worship in schools in England by Catholic Education Service*¹⁰;

Before granting any request for withdrawal from RSHE, parents will be invited to meet with Head of the School to discuss the request, to understand the request and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

This will include exploring the benefits of RSHE education, and any detrimental effects of withdrawal, including social and emotional impact on the child.

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.

10. Balance Curriculum

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSHE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues

Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSHE. 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.

11. Responsibility for teaching the programme

⁹ RSHE, right to withdraw, page 17; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-RSHE-and-health-education>

¹⁰ Guidance on the right of withdrawal from Religious Education and/or collective worship in schools in England; <https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/schools/religious-education/item/1003623-right-of-withdrawal-from-re>

Responsibility for the specific parts of RSHE programme lays with Mrs Cole, Head of School (RE/RSHE/Mental Health and Wellbeing), Mrs Edge (Science) and Mr Plymen (PE).

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.

12. External Visitors

Our school will often call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSHE. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher led sessions. It is important that any external visitor is clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in school delivering a session. Any visitor must adhere to our code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Checklist for External Speakers to Schools. Health professionals should follow the school's policies, minimising the potential for disclosures or inappropriate comments using negotiated ground rules and distancing techniques as other teachers would. They will ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice.

13. 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 our Christian beliefs;
- ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children;
- establish a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used;
- ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSHE within PSHE.

Head of School

The Head of School 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.

RHE/RSHE Leader

The co-ordinator with the Head of School 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 RSHE and the provision of in-service training.

All Staff

RSHE is a whole school issue. All teachers have a responsibility of care; they will be expected to teach RSHE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training and formation (professional, cultural, spiritual) will be made available for all staff teaching RSHE.

All Staff share the responsibility of guaranteeing delivery of high-quality education including teaching RSHE.

Personal witness of all Staff demonstrated through their understanding, objectivity, prudence and consistency of their words and deeds plays a vital role in effectively delivering RSHE and supporting pupils' development in this important and sensitive area.

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 them¹¹.

14. Relationship to other policies and Curriculum Subjects

This RSHE 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 (for example, Bullying policy, Safeguarding Policy etc)¹²

Pupils with particular difficulties whether of a physical or intellectual nature will receive appropriately differentiated support in order to enable

¹¹ 5 CES Checklist for External Speakers to Schools, 2016; <https://www.abdiocese.org.uk/education/re-catholic-life>

¹² St Mary's School Policies <https://st-marys-bognor.co.uk/about-us/policies-reports/>

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 RSHE in PSHE classes will link to/complement learning in those areas identified in the RSHE audit and other subject areas such as science and PE.

15. Children's questions

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSHE can take place.

In our school every child is encouraged and supported to express themselves, to ask questions freely and to grow in a process of relational dialogue, interacting in a constructive way, exercising tolerance, understanding different points of views and creating trust in an atmosphere of authentic harmony, free from bullying and harassment from other children and young people¹³.

16. Controversial or sensitive issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSHE. These may be matter of maturity, of personal involvement or experience of children, of disagreement with the official teaching of the Church, of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious or harmful activity. The governors believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSHE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion.

Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, e.g., where a child or young person's questions hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature.

17. Supporting children and young people who are at risk

Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSHE takes place. Effective RSHE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well

¹³ Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools, 58.

lead to disclosure of safeguarding issues. 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.

Relevant documents:

- *School Safeguarding Policy*¹⁴

18. 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 RSHE 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 teacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken

19. Monitoring and evaluation

The RSHE Leader 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 biannually 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

¹⁴ St Mary's School Safeguarding Policy; <https://st-marys-bognor.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/St-Marys-WSCC-Child-Protection-and-Safeguarding-Policy-September-2024.pdf>

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.

RSHE Leader: Mrs K Cole

Link Governor: Mrs A Claveria