



St Ralph  
Sherwin  
Catholic Multi Academy Trust



# Relationship and Sex Education Policy



One of four Catholic Multi  
Academy Trusts in the  
Diocese of Nottingham



## Document Provenance

<b>Title of policy:</b>	Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)	
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<b>Version number:</b>	1	
<b>Date approved:</b>	December 2022	
<b>Approved by:</b>	Trustees	
<b>Date of next review:</b>	<i>December 2024 (every 2 years)</i>	
<b>Document review and editorial updates:</b>		
<b>Version control</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Key revisions included</b>
Version 1	17/01/23	New policy personalised for MMB



## 1. Introduction and Purpose

*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*

*John 13:34*

### St Mary's Mission Statement

As Parents, Staff and Governors:

"We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We are prophets of a future not our own." (St Oscar Romero)

Inspired by the light of our Catholic Christian Faith, our school primarily aims to develop the whole child within a Christian community.

- As children of God we value and respect each other.
- We love Jesus and through our relationships with others we share this love.
- We work in partnership with home and the parishes of St Mary's and Holy Spirit.
- We support and encourage everybody to achieve their best in work and play.
- We celebrate whatever is good.
- We say sorry, support and forgive each other as Jesus showed us.
- We prepare for and share the sacraments.
- We respect other people's beliefs and cultures.
- We support those in need.

- 1.1. The DfE guidance states that "children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way"<sup>1</sup>. It is about the development of the pupil's knowledge and understanding of themselves 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.
- 1.2. In primary schools the focus should be on "teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults."<sup>2</sup> This would include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.
- 1.3. In Secondary schools RSE should "give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate



relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure)."<sup>3</sup>

- 1.4. In this policy directors, governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions about relationships and sex education (RSE) within the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church. It sets out the rationale for, and approach to, relationships and sex education in schools.
- 1.5. The policy has been informed by consultation undertaken with parents and carers and pupils. Consultation was undertaken via an online parental survey. Feedback was analysed and assimilated to ensure the policy reflects the mission, vision and values of St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1. This policy applies to all staff in every school and should be adopted as a whole school approach to RSE. It is consistent with statutory and legal requirements and is significant to ensure that all pupils grow up to be healthy, happy and safe and know how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.

## **3. Legislation and regulation**

- 3.1. Academies are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science.

## **4. Rationale**

- 4.1. The reasons for inclusion of RSE go further than the statutory requirements and include:

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

- 4.2. 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.



- 4.3. 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.
- 4.4. 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.
- 4.5. 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 whatever household they come from. It will also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

## **5. Values and virtues**

- 5.1. The 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 the 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.

## **6. Aim of RSE and the Mission Statement**

- 6.1. Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, 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:
- 6.2. 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.



## 7. Objectives

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. 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.
- 7.3. 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.

## **8. Inclusion and differentiated learning**

- 8.1. 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 and sexual harassment), 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).

## **9. Equalities Obligations**

- 9.1. The local governing body has 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.
- 9.2. The school will also strive to ensure that pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of, and respect for, the protected characteristics. These being: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. If any of these elements are not taught within the primary curriculum, school leaders should assure themselves (as a minimum) that the missing themes are covered in the curriculum of the secondary school that the majority of pupils transfer into at the end of Key Stage 2. Furthermore, in accordance with the DfE's statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex and Health Education, secondary academies are required to teach about LGBT relationships. This provision will be inspected as part of an Ofsted Graded Inspection (usually every five years).
- 9.3. 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.



## 10. Broad Content of RSE

- 10.1. 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.

## 11. Parents and Carers

- 11.1. 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 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.
- 11.2. Parents must 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. 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.
- 11.3. 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. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning.
- 11.4. We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.
- 11.5. Please refer to the DfE guidance Page 17 for further details on the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw)<sup>6</sup>.

## 12. Balanced Curriculum

- 12.1. 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.



- 12.2. 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.
- 12.3. In line with the SRSCMAT Assessment Framework and along with all other curriculum subject areas, leaders will identify the key knowledge pupils will be expected to know and remember from the RSE curriculum. Assessment both formative and on occasions summative will provide valid and reliable information about whether pupils are successfully learning the intended curriculum.

### **13.Children's questions, Controversial or Sensitive issues**

- 13.1. The school will want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. The school will 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.
- 13.2. There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE. These may be matter of maturity, of personal involvement or experience of children, of disagreement with the official teaching of the Church, of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious or harmful activity.
- 13.3. The Trust believes that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. (See also Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, Managing difficult questions, Page 23 for more detail)
- 13.4. 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.

### **14.Supporting children and young people who are at risk**

- 14.1. 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.

- 14.2. 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.

## **15. Confidentiality and Advice**

- 15.1. 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.
- 15.2. 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.
- 15.3. 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

## **16. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **16.1. Delivery of the programme**

- 16.1.1 Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lays with the following subject leaders: Religious Education, Science, Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) and Physical Education (PE).
- 16.1.2 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.



#### 16.2. External Visitors

- Academies will often call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSE. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher led sessions.
- It is important that any external visitor is clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in school delivering a session. **Any visitor must adhere to our code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Checklist for External Speakers to Schools.**
- 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.**

#### 16.3. CMAT Trust Board

- Approve the RSE policy, ensuring that it aligns with Church teachings in addition to guidance and good practice issued by the DfE.
- Review the policy within appropriate timescales or when required to as a consequence of changes in national guidance.

#### 16.4. Local Governing Bodies

- Ensure that parents/ carers have been consulted on the policy;
- ensure that the policy is available to parents;
- 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 PSHE as well as complying with Church teachings.

#### 16.5. Headteacher

The Headteacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Local Governing Body, parents, the Diocesan Schools' Service and appropriate agencies.

#### 16.6. PSHE/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 in-service



training. *(They may be supported by the curriculum deputy and the member of staff with responsibility for child protection).*

#### 16.7. All Staff

RSE is a whole school issue. All teachers have a responsibility of care; as well as fostering academic progress they should actively contribute to the guardianship and guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of their pupils. Teachers will be expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSE. All 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.

### 17. Monitoring, Compliance and Review

- 17.1. The PSHE/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 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 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.

### Annex 1

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- experiential
- active
- Mind mapping
- film & video
- group work
- role-play
- trigger drawings
- values clarification