A model framework for Catholic Primary RSE

Revised Spring 2026

Introduction

Any teaching about love and sexual relationships in a Catholic school must be rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching about what it is to be truly human in Christ, what it means to live well in relationship with others and be presented within a positive framework of Christian virtue. For this reason, we encourage Catholic schools to speak about Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) rather than Sex and Relationship Education (SRE), since this emphasises the importance of healthy relationships to human well-being, as the core learning within an RSE curriculum.

Pedagogical Principles

A good RSE programme must enshrine core pedagogical virtues – that it is, it must, above else, qualify as good education. Therefore, it will be:

Progressive & Developmental

The learning needs to reflect each stage of the development of the person. It needs to be part of both the Primary and Secondary phase of education and it needs to be appropriate to the age and stage of development of children and young people during the different phases of their education. It also needs to be continuous and developmental. It should be a process which is planned from beginning to end with one phase of education informing the work of the next so that children and young people can be led to a deeper and fuller understanding by degrees at a rate which corresponds to their maturing.

Adaptive

Schools must ensure that RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils and is taught in a way that allows access to those pupils at different stages of cognitive and emotional development. Learning and teaching methods will need to be adapted and specialist resources and training will need to be provided for those with particular needs. Schools, therefore, should ensure that children with special educational needs and disabilities are not at any point withdrawn from RSE because of lack of resources and training or to catch up in other subjects.

Cross-curricular

Since a Catholic school is committed to the education of the whole person, teaching on relationships and sexuality needs to be reflected in each relevant part of the curriculum. Whilst, for example, some aspects of RSE will be more appropriately explored in science lessons and some more appropriately explored in RE lessons, each should be informed by the other. Each discipline should speak with consistency about the meaning of human love and the virtues that are enshrined in the Church's teaching on human love.

Integrated

A well-planned programme will not just ensure that there is correspondence between phases and across disciplines but will ensure that parents are fully involved in the planning and evaluation of the teaching of relationships and sexuality. Ideally, pupils should hear a consistent message about the meaning and value of human sexuality at home, in the parish and at school. This can only be achieved if the home, parish and school work to integrate the teaching of RSE.

Co-ordinated

None of these educational goals are possible if RSE is not given the time and importance it deserves by those who plan and implement its delivery in school. RSE must be taken seriously by school leaders; led properly by someone who has the time and expertise to co-ordinate the subject with dedication and commitment at a senior level; taught by those committed to doing it well; taught as part of a whole-school approach by those who are able to celebrate – not merely tolerate – the teaching of the Church on love and human sexuality.

Balanced

Promoting Catholic virtues, schools should ensure that children and young people are offered a broad and balanced RSE programme which provides them with clear factual, scientific information when relevant and meets the statutory requirements placed on schools.

The structure of this model framework.

This model framework covers EYFS, KS1 and KS2 and is based on three core themes within which there will be broad overlap. It is adaptable to the age and ability of the pupils. The three themes are:

- **Created and loved by God** (this explores the individual)
  The Christian imperative to love self, made in the image and likeness of God, shows an understanding of the importance of valuing and understanding oneself as the basis for personal relationships.
- **Created to love others** (this explores an individual's relationships with others)
  God is love. We are created out of love and for love. The command to love is the basis of all Christian morality.
- **Created to live in community – local, national & global** (this explores the individual's relationships with the wider world)
  Human beings are relational by nature and live in the wider community. Through our exchange with others, our mutual service and through dialogue, we attempt to proclaim and extend the Kingdom of God for the good of individuals and the good of society.

Each theme covers the core strands of 'Education in Virtue' and 'Religious Understanding' as well as strands which cover the PSHE content of the theme.

Christian Virtue and RSE

Each theme begins with a statement of the virtues which are necessary to living well in relationship with others and these virtues should underpin the teaching but also should emerge as a consequence of it. Virtues are habits which are learned from experience and are gained through imitation, the same virtues being modelled by those who teach. They express the qualities of character that schools should seek to develop in their pupils, through their exemplification by the whole community of which the pupils are a part. These virtues reflect our Christian tradition but they are also, of course, fundamental human virtues which are universally shared.

Theme 1: Created and Loved by God

	EYFS & KS1	KS2
Education in virtue	**In a Catholic school, pupils are growing to be:** 1.1.1.1. Respectful of their own bodies and character 1.1.1.2. Appreciative for blessings 1.1.1.3. Grateful to others and to God 1.1.1.4. Patient when they do not always get what they want	**In a Catholic school, pupils are growing to be:** 2.1.1.1. Respectful of their own bodies, character and giftedness 2.1.1.2. Appreciative for blessings 2.1.1.3. Grateful to others and to God 2.1.1.4. Self-disciplined and able to delay or forego gratification for the sake of greater goods 2.1.1.5. Discerning in their decision making 2.1.1.6. Determined and resilient in the face of difficulty 2.1.1.7. Courageous in the face of new situations and in facing their fears
Religious understanding of the human person: loving myself	**Pupils should be taught:** 1.1.2.1. We are made by God and are special 1.1.2.2. We are all God's children 1.1.2.3. Ways of expressing gratitude to God 1.1.2.4. About the sacrament of Baptism	**Pupils should be taught:** 2.1.2.1. We are special people made in the image and likeness of God 2.1.2.2. We are children of God with an innate dignity 2.1.2.3. God has created us for a purpose (vocation) 2.1.2.4. Life is precious and their body is God's gift to them 2.1.2.5. Prayer and worship are ways of nourishing their relationship with God 2.1.2.6. Sacraments often coincide with different natural stages in life, for example Baptism often occurs near birth for Catholics

	EYFS & KS1	KS2
Me, my body and my health	**Pupils should be taught:** **Me** 1.1.3.1. We are all unique individuals 1.1.3.2. We all have individual gifts, talents and abilities **My body** 1.1.3.3. The names of the external parts of the body 1.1.3.4. The similarities and differences between girls and boys **My Health** 1.1.3.5. How to maintain personal hygiene 1.1.3.6. What constitutes a healthy life-style, including physical activity, dental health and healthy eating 1.1.3.7. To understand the harm that excessive time spent online can have physical and mental wellbeing.	**Pupils should be taught:** **Me** 2.1.3.1. Everyone expresses their uniqueness in different ways and that being different is not always easy 2.1.3.2. Strategies to develop self-confidence and self-esteem 2.1.3.3. Each person has a purpose in the world 2.1.3.4. That similarities and differences between people arise from several different factors (See protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010, Part 2, Chapter 1, sections 4-12) **My body** 2.1.3.5. Their body will change and develop as they grow 2.1.3.6. About the growth and development of humans and the changes experienced during puberty, including the menstrual cycle 2.1.3.7. The names of the main parts of the body, including identifying and correctly naming: penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum, nipples **My health** 2.1.3.8. How to make informed choices that have an impact on their health and what constitutes a healthy life-style, including physical activity, dental health and healthy eating 2.1.3.9. The facts about legal and illegal harmful substances, including smoking, nicotine products, vaping, alcohol use and drug-taking. 2.1.3.10. To understand the harm that excessive time spent online can have physical and mental wellbeing.

Emotional well-being and attitudes	**Pupils should be taught:** **Emotional well-being** 1.1.4.1. That we all have different likes and dislikes 1.1.4.2. A language to describe feelings **Attitudes** 1.1.4.3. A basic understanding that feelings and actions are two different things 1.1.4.4. Simple strategies for managing feelings and behaviour 1.1.4.5. That choices have consequences	**Pupils should be taught:** **Emotional well-being** 2.1.4.1. Their emotions may change as they approach and as they grow and move through puberty 2.1.4.2. To extend their vocabulary to deepen their understanding of the range and intensity of their feelings and know when to seek help when emotions become overwhelming 2.1.4.3. What positively and negatively affects their physical, mental and emotional health (including the media and changing friendships) 2.1.4.4. To recognise how images in the media do not always reflect reality and can affect how people feel about themselves and others **Attitudes** 2.1.4.5. That some behaviour is unacceptable, unhealthy or risky 2.1.4.6. Strategies to build resilience in order to identify and resist unacceptable pressure from a variety of sources

	EYFS & KS1	KS2
Life cycles and fertility	**Pupils should be taught:** **Life cycles** 1.1.5.1. That there are life stages from birth to death	**Pupils should be taught:** **Life cycles** 2.1.5.1. How a baby grows and develops in its mother's womb 2.1.5.2. To recognise the differences that occur at each stage of a human being's development (including childhood, adolescence, adulthood, older age) **Fertility** 2.1.5.3. The nature and role of menstruation in the fertility cycle 2.1.5.4. How human life is conceived in the womb, including the language of sperm and ova

Theme 2: Created to love others

	EYFS & KS1	KS2
Education in virtue	**In a Catholic school, pupils are growing to be:** 1.2.1.1. Friendly, able to make and keep friends 1.2.1.2. Caring, attentive to the needs of others and generous in their responses 1.2.1.3. Respectful of others, their uniqueness, their wants and their needs 1.2.1.4. Forgiving, able to say sorry and not hold grudges against those who have hurt them 1.2.1.5. Courteous, learning to say, “please” and “thank you” 1.2.1.6. Honest, able to tell the difference between truth and lies	**In a Catholic school, pupils are growing to be:** 2.2.1.1. Loyal, able to develop and sustain caring friendships 2.2.1.2. Compassionate, able to empathise with the suffering of others and the generosity to help others in trouble 2.2.1.3. Respectful, able to identify other people’s personal space and respect the ways in which they are different 2.2.1.4. Forgiving, developing the skills to allow reconciliation in relationships 2.2.1.5. Courteous in their dealings with friends and strangers 2.2.1.6. Honest, committed to living truthfully and with integrity
Religious understanding of human relationships: loving others	**Pupils should be taught:** 1.2.2.1. We are part of God’s family 1.2.2.2. All families and people who care for me are important 1.2.2.3. That saying sorry is important and can help mend broken friendships 1.2.2.4. Jesus cared for others 1.2.2.5. That we should love other people in the same way Jesus loves us	**Pupils should be taught:** 2.2.2.1. Christians belong to the Church family which includes the school, parish and diocese 2.2.2.2. Families are the building blocks of society and where faith, wisdom and virtues are passed onto the next generation 2.2.2.3. The importance of forgiveness and reconciliation in relationships and some of Jesus' teaching on forgiveness 2.2.2.4. The sacrament of marriage involves commitment and self-giving. It is a formal, lifelong commitment

Personal Relationships	**Pupils should be taught:** 1.2.3.1. The characteristics of positive and negative relationships 1.2.3.2. To identify special people (e.g. family, carers, friends) and what makes them special 1.2.3.3. There are different family structures and these should be respected 1.2.3.4. Family units should be a place of love, security and stability. 1.2.3.5. The importance of spending time with your family 1.2.3.6. How their behaviour affects other people and that there are appropriate and inappropriate behaviours 1.2.3.7. To recognise when people are being unkind to them and others and how to respond 1.2.3.8. Different types of teasing and bullying which are wrong and unacceptable	**Pupils should be taught:** 2.2.3.1. How to maintain positive relationships and strategies to use when relationships go wrong 2.2.3.2. There are different types of relationships including those between acquaintances, friends, relatives and family 2.2.3.3. Marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment 2.2.3.4. For the Church, marriage has a special significance as one of the sacraments 2.2.3.5. The characteristics of a healthy family life. 2.2.3.6. How to make informed choices in relationships and that choices have positive, neutral and negative consequences 2.2.3.7. How to respond appropriately to bullying (including cyber-bullying) and an awareness of responsible use of technology 2.2.3.8. About harassment and exploitation in relationships, including physical, emotional and sexual abuse and how to respond 2.2.3.9. To recognise and manage risk, to develop resilience and learn how to cope with “dares” and other ways in which people can be pressurised 2.2.3.10. About changes that can happen in life, e.g. loss, separation, divorce and bereavement and the emotions that can accompany these changes

Keeping safe and people who can help me	**Pupils should be taught:** **Keeping safe** 1.2.4.1. To recognise safe and unsafe situations and ways of keeping safe, including simple rules for keeping safe online 1.2.4.2. To use simple rules for resisting pressure when they feel unsafe or uncomfortable 1.2.4.3. The difference between good and bad secrets 1.2.4.4. Identifying and correctly name their "private parts" for the purposes of safeguarding them from sexual exploitation 1.2.4.5. Importance of seeking and giving permission in relationships. **People who can help me** 1.2.4.6. Who to go to if they are worried or need help 1.2.4.7. That there are a number of different people and organisations they can go to for help in different situations	**Pupils should be taught:** **Keeping safe** 2.2.4.1. To recognise their increasing independence brings increased responsibility to keep themselves and others safe 2.2.4.2. How to use technology safely 2.2.4.3. That not all images, language and behaviour are appropriate 2.2.4.4. To judge what kind of physical contact is acceptable or unacceptable and how to respond 2.2.4.5. Importance of seeking and giving permission in relationships **People who can help me** 2.2.4.6. That there are a number of different people and organisations they can go to for help in different situations and how to contact them 2.2.4.7. How to report and get help if they encounter inappropriate materials or messages 2.2.4.8. To keep asking for help until they are heard

Theme 3: Created to live in community (local, national and global)

	EYFS & KS1	KS2
Education in virtue	**In a Catholic school, pupils are growing to be:** 1.3.1.1. Just and fair in their treatment of other people, locally, nationally and globally 1.3.1.2. People who serve others, locally, nationally and globally 1.3.1.3. Active in their commitment to bring about change	**In a Catholic school, pupils are growing to be:** 2.3.1.1. Just, understanding the impact of their actions locally, nationally and globally 2.3.1.2. Self-giving, able to put aside their own wants in order to serve others locally, nationally and globally 2.3.1.3. Prophetic in their ability to identify injustice and speak out against it locally, nationally and globally
Religious understanding of the importance of human communities	**Pupils should be taught:** 1.3.2.1. That God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit 1.3.2.2. Some scripture illustrating the importance of living in community 1.3.2.3. Jesus' teaching on who is my neighbour	**Pupils should be taught:** 2.3.2.1. God is Trinity – a communion of persons 2.3.2.2. The key principles of Catholic Social Teaching 2.3.2.3. The Church is the Body of Christ
Living in the wider world	**Pupils should be taught:** 1.3.3.1. That they belong to various communities such as home, school, parish, the wider local community and the global community 1.3.3.2. That their behaviour has an impact on the communities to which they belong 1.3.3.3. That people and other living things have needs and that they have responsibilities to meet them; 1.3.3.4. About what harms and improves the world in which they live 1.3.3.5. How diseases are spread and can be controlled and the responsibilities they have for their own health and that of others e.g. washing hands	**Pupils should be taught:** 2.3.3.1. That there are some cultural practices which are against British law and universal rights (e.g. honour-based violence and forced marriage, human trafficking etc.) 2.3.3.2. That actions such as female genital mutilation (FGM) constitute abuse, are crimes and how to get support if they have fears for themselves or their peers 2.3.3.3. That bacteria and viruses can affect health and that following simple routines and medical interventions can reduce their spread 2.3.3.4. About the range of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and beyond and the importance of living in right relationship with one another