

ST THOMAS' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Relationship and Health Education Policy



Headteacher: Geraldine Leahy

Agreed by LGC: July 2026

Due for next review: July 2028

Our Mission Statement is for all our children, staff and families to share in
'Learning in the Light of Christ'

We strive to achieve this by living out our six core values of
Respect, Kindness, Thankfulness, Service, Forgiveness, Perseverance
which were chosen by all stakeholders

Introduction

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions about relationships and health education (RHE). We set out our rationale for, and approach to relationships and health education in the school. The policy has been written in line with the Catholic Education Service Model.

Implementation and Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Headteacher, RHE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and Staff. The next review date is July 2028.

Defining Relationship and Sex Education

The DfE guidance states that “children and young people need knowledge and skills that will enable them to make informed and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships.” High quality RSE does this by promoting their “moral, social, mental and physical development” and cultivating “positive characteristics including resilience, self-worth, self-respect, honesty, integrity, courage, kindness and trustworthiness”. 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. In this school the focus will be on “teaching the skills and knowledge that form the building blocks of all positive relationships, supporting children from the start of their education to grown into kind, caring adults who have respect for others and know how to keep themselves and others safe.” This will include the topics of families and the people of whom care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe. By supporting confidence and self-esteem, RSE will enable young people to make their own choices about whether and when to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, once they reach the age of consent, and to resist pressures to have sex.

Statutory Curriculum Requirements

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of the National Curriculum Science. However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

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

At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity: Father, Son and Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation. As a consequence of the Christian belief that we are made in the image and likeness of God, gender and sexuality are seen as God’s gift, reflect God’s beauty, and share in the divine creativity. 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 (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.

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 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.

Aim of RSE and the Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, our school aims state that we will endeavour to raise pupils' self-esteem, help them to grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of all persons and develop caring and sensitive attitudes. It is in this context that we commit ourselves:

In partnership with parents, to provide children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education" which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

Objectives

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

- reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility;
- respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others;
- joy in the goodness of the created world and their own bodily natures;
- responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others;
- 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;
- how to keep themselves safe by 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;

Outcomes

Inclusion and Differentiated Learning

We will ensure that 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 pupils 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. (In looking at these questions, it is important to

draw links to the school's inclusion policy).

Equalities and 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 identify, 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.

St Thomas' use the TEN: TEN Plus Life to the Full material to support the understanding of the following 10 principles:

1. Our bodies are good
2. As we grow in our loving relationships with others, we become closer to the image and likeness of God.
3. Catholic RSE should be about the whole person.
4. Catholic RSE should be taught in partnership with parents
5. Our deepest identity is as a child of God
6. Story can change hearts and minds
7. Catholic RHE is an education in virtue
8. Catholic RHE is an education in conscience
9. RSE is about striving for the common Good
10. Prayer, Scripture and the Sacraments underpin and make possible the living out of Catholic teaching.

The core themes that underpin the RSE programme of study are:

Created and Loved by God	Me, My Body and My Health Emotional Well-being and Attitudes Life Cycles and Fertility
Created to Love Others	Personal Relationships Keeping Safe and People Who Can Help Me
Created to Live in Community	Living in the Wider World

By the end of Key Stage 1:

- To understand that they are created by God out of love and for love.
- To understand similarities and difference between people, including our God-given bodies and the things they enable us to do.
- To understand maintaining personal hygiene and the physical differences between boys and girls.
- To learn how they manage their feelings and about the consequences of their actions.
- To learn about the different local and global communities that they are a part of, and what rights and responsibilities come with belonging to a community.
- To understand that God loves us, and nothing we can do will stop Him from loving us.
- To understand how to cope with various social situations and dilemmas and the importance of saying sorry and forgiveness.
- To understand the risk of being online and understanding physical boundaries.
- To understand the specifics of the human life cycle and celebrate how they have already changed and grown*.
- *Statutory National Curriculum for Science - KS1 Programme of Study

By the end of Key Stage 2:

- To develop an understanding of the importance of valuing themselves as the basis for personal relationships.
- To learn the differences between people as enriching to a community and know self-confidence should arise from being loved by God.
- To understand physical changes that boys and girls go through during puberty and how they should respect and take care of their bodies as a gift from God.
- To understand the pressures that they may experience from themselves, others and the media.
- To develop skills for resilience through thankfulness, manage thoughts and feelings and coping with new challenging feelings such as romance and rage.
- To understand that they grow and change throughout life.
- To know the names for the parts of the body.
- To know the basic biology of human reproduction.
- To know and understand their bodies and their need for personal hygiene.
- To develop an appreciation of what is involved in bringing up children and what responsibilities parents have.
- To understand coping strategies for complex relationships and conflict, including identifying and understanding how to respond to spoken and unspoken pressures and consent.
- To equip children to make sensible and safe decisions about what online content they should/shouldn't share, online bullying and how to report it to get help.
- To understand and spot the following types of abuse: sexual; physical; emotional and neglect.
- To understand how the Trinity demonstrates the perfect loving community, and we are called to emulate this self-giving and self-sacrificing love in our communities.
- To understand the teachings of the Common Good.

*Statutory National Curriculum for Science – KS2 Programme of Study.

Delivery

Classes will remain whole class (mixed girls and boys) for all aspects of RSE, except:

- For Ys 5 & 6 when separate gender provision will be available to view and to discuss the roles of gender and puberty.
- For any individual child when discussing personal hygiene or to respect parents' cultural and religious beliefs.

Teaching strategies will include: establishing ground rules; distancing techniques; discussions; project learning; reflection; experiential; active; brainstorming; film and video; group work; role-play; drawings and values clarification.

Assessment

A record is kept in teacher's planning of the delivery of RSE. Pupils are given the opportunity for self-evaluation at an appropriate level for each year group and within the TEN:TEN objectives for each unit.

Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents (and other carers who stand in their place) are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children. Therefore, the school will support parents and carers by providing material to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help parents/carers to find out more. Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RHE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning.

Parents must be consulted before this policy is ratified by the governors. They will be consulted at every stage of the development of the RHE 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 RHE programme. Our aim is that, at the end of the consultation process, every parent and carer will have full confidence in the school's RHE programme to meet their child's needs.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Sex Education except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum Science orders and the DfE statutory guidance Relationships Education curriculum. 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. We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed. 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.

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 RHE programme that offers a range of viewpoints in issues. Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RHE 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.

Responsibility for Teaching the Programme

Responsibility for the specific Relationships and Health Education programme lays with the Headteacher, the RHE co-ordinator, and the RE, Science and PHSE Subject Leaders.

However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RHE 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 RHE. 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.

Other roles and responsibilities regarding RSE

Governors

-

Draw up the RHE 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 Catholic 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 RSE within PHSE.

Headteacher, the RHE Co-ordinator

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.

PSHE/RHE 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 RHE and the provision of in-service training.

All Staff

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

Relationship to other policies and Curriculum subjects

This RSE 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: Anti-Bullying policy, Children Protection and 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.

Learning about RSE in PSHE classes will link to/complement learning in those areas identified in the RSE audit.

Children's Questions

The Governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RHE 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 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 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 would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class times, e.g. where a child or young person's questions hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature.

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 senior member of staff responsible.

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 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 circumstance they would have to inform others, e.g., parents, Headteacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The RSE Subject Lead will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by reviewing plans 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.