

Personal Relationships and Sex Education Policy

St John's Catholic Comprehensive School



*Excellence for All
Service to Others
Inspired by Christ*

Date of last review:	September 2025	Date of next review:	September 2027
Author:	Associate Director of RE & Catholic Life	Owner:	Associate Headteacher
Approval:	Full Governing Body Panel		

SCHOOL MISSION:

Guided by our school vision and mission statement, this policy outlines the school's rationale and approach to Relationship and Sex Education (RSE). It is the product of the collaborative efforts of our school Governors, teachers, students and parents. Consultation of this document has been established through student focus groups, parental questionnaires, a review of the RSE curriculum and informed by multidisciplinary meetings with Governor Representatives, the Diocese, the Child Protection Officer, the Head of RE, the Head of Science, and the Headteacher. This policy has been informed by the Diocesan policy "Education in Human Love Policy statement" October 2020.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW OF POLICY

The implementation will take place after consultation with the Governors in the Autumn term of the academic Year 2025 - 2026. This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Headteacher/Associate Headteacher, RSE coordinator, the Governing Body and staff. The next review date is October 2027.

STATUTORY CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

As a maintained secondary school, we must provide RSE to all pupils under section 34 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#).

In teaching RSE, we must have regard to [guidance](#) issued by the secretary of state, as outlined in section 403 of the [Education Act 1996](#).

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 404 to 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the [Equality Act 2010](#)
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

At St John's Catholic Comprehensive School, we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

RATIONALE

Adolescence is a key period of identity formation and developing a strong sense of self is considered to be one of the central tasks of the adolescence. Focused on this goal, many adolescents move from the security of childhood towards the opportunities but also the questions and decisions the adult world seems to offer. In light of this understanding of the adolescent mind-set, we are involved in RSE because of our Christian beliefs about God and the human person. The first theme of Catholic social teaching refers to the unique dignity of each human person made in the image and likeness of God, consequently our approach to RSE is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person, presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals and aims to empower young people as they grow and address the situations of their life experiences. Students also have the opportunity to explore alternative interpretations of the issues addressed in this type of education. This guidance is the blueprint for our planning, delivery and evaluation of RSE programmes.

To guide students through adolescence, there is an imperative need for caring adults as a constant in their lives, particularly in the delivery of RSE. Gravissimum Education recognises this as being especially true in the age of rapid social and technological progress. This duty of care is inextricably linked to the teaching vocation of Catholic educators. Indeed, the Congregation for Catholic Education said in 1977, 'teachers are of the first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools'. Guided by these

Catholic principles, it is the sensitive handling of relationships and sex education, paired with the mutual respect between teachers and pupils that the caring ethos of a school becomes a reality. Extending upon this, recognition of the collaborative responsibility between parents, teachers, students, governors and the Church for the welfare of all members of the school community, promotes good practice of RSE and indeed safeguards an attitude of care that is infused in every element of school life.

In order to, in part, fulfil our vocation as Christian educators and the statutory curriculum requirements, St John's has developed comprehensive Relationship and Sex Education programmes. A foundational belief of the Catholic Church is that we are all made in the image and likeness of God, so gender and sexuality are seen as God's gift and share in the divine creativity. Understanding this, RSE will be placed firmly within the context of relationship as it is there that sexuality grows and develops. According to the Department for Education, RSE is defined 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'. Adding to this, RSE will be in accordance with the Church's moral teaching. It will emphasise the importance of marriage and the family whilst acknowledging that all pupils have a fundamental right to be respected regardless of their personal experiences. Those teachers responsible for the delivery of RSE will do so in a sensitive manner differentiating learning to the diverse needs of all students. This is not only a moral obligation but also a responsibility set out in the Equalities Act 2010.

VALUES AND VIRTUES

The RSE programmes at St John's are underpinned by the Catholic values relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life. The programmes will also promote those virtues which are essential in responding to God's call to love others with a proper respect for the dignity and the dignity of the human body. The following virtues will be explicitly promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

AIMS

The aim of Relationship and Sex Education at St John's Catholic Comprehensive School shares the vision of the Second Vatican Council which spoke of the need for 'a positive and prudent sex education'. This should be understood within the broader framework of an education for love and mutual self-giving. The programme will be attuned with students' physical, psychological, social, emotional and spiritual maturity.

PRINCIPLES

Relationships education should 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
- Responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others
- 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
- Learning how to be faithful in a relationship.

PURPOSE

To develop the following personal and social skills:

- Making sound judgements and good choices which are respectful of the individual's

commitments

- Loving and being loved, and the ability to form friendships and loving relationships free from exploitation, abuse and bullying
- Managing emotions within relationships confidently and sensitively
- Developing self-esteem and confidence, demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others
- Building resilience to appropriately respond and the ability to resist unwanted pressures, recognising the influence and impact of the media, internet and peer groups, assessing risks and managing behaviours in order to minimise the risk to health and personal value and wellbeing
- Being patient, delaying gratification and learning to recognize the appropriate stages in the development of relationships and how to love chastely
- Assessing risk 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 sexual love
- The physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty
- The facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love functions are an essential and sacred part of procreation
- How to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and their life commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception
- How to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice

METHOD

Relationships Education will be:

- Taught in PSHE lessons and bespoke RSE lessons
- Taught in Religious Education through the RE Curriculum
- Incorporated into 'Theme Days' for each year group through presentations, speakers, workshops and with the input of appropriate outside agencies. These agencies will be guided by the relevant in-school staff members in their delivery of materials and informed by the code of practice, 'Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools', outlined by the CES
- Supported by using a broad range of age appropriate resources

OUTCOMES

Inclusion and Differentiated Learning:

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the needs of individual students in respect to a student's 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 students to 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 has wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all students, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, national identity, ethnic or national origin, pregnancy, maturity, 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 dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific relationships and sex curriculum. A detailed programme of our RSE curriculum can be found on the school website.

Teaching strategies for delivering this content will include:

- Established ground rules
- Distancing techniques
- Discussion
- Project Learning
- Reflection
- Film and Video
- Group Work
- Role Play
- Values clarification

CURRICULUM

Our RSE curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1, but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

We will share all curriculum materials with parents and carers on request.

PARENTS AND CARERS

The Catechism of the Catholic Church recognises that parents have the first responsibility for educating their child. As a Catholic school, we provide the principle means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children. Parents and 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.

The school respects that parents have the right to withdraw their child from RSE except from those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. Should parents wish to avail of this option, they are asked to notify the school by contacting the Head of RE. The school will then provide materials for parents to help the child in their learning if they so require it. We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.

TRAINING

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

MONITORING

The delivery of RSE is monitored by The Associate Director of RE and Catholic Life and PSHE Leader through:

- Learning walks
- Booklet looks

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers.

BALANCED CURRICULUM

Whilst promoting Catholic values, virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that students are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. Students will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering aspects of the law pertaining to RSE, e.g. issues related to forced marriages, FGM, abortion, the age of consent, legislation relating to equality. Knowing about the facts and enabling students to explore different viewpoints is not the same as promoting behaviour and is not compatible with our school's promotion of Catholic teaching. We will ensure that students 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 RSE programme lays with both the RE, Science and PSHE staff. However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspects of the RSE programme. They will be role models for students of good, healthy, wholesome relationships as between staff, other adults and students. They will also be contributing to the development of students' personal and social skills.

APPENDIX 1

Year 7

	Focus	Theme Title	Description
Theme 1	Religious Understanding	Who Am I?	Our core identity is that each of us is a completely unique person, a unity of body and soul, created and loved by God.
Theme 2	My Body	Changing Bodies	Puberty involves physical, emotional and sexual development. Daunting though it can be, it is part of God's plan for us.
Theme 3	Emotional Well-Being	Healthy Inside And Out	Thinking about self-esteem helps us consider its impact and how to nurture it.
Theme 4	Life Cycles	Where We Come From	Sexual intercourse is revealed as more than just a physical act, but a gift from God for married couples, an expression of love and His plan for how babies are made.
Theme 5	Personal Relationships	Family and Friends	Reflecting on different types of friendship and family structure opens up strategies for managing behaviour through consideration of thoughts, feelings and actions.
Theme 6	Keeping Safe	My Life on Screen	Online lives need safeguarding, just like in real life.
Theme 7	Wider World	Living Responsibly	Becoming aware of the effects of actions on others helps us understand the concept of social responsibility.

Year 8

	Focus	Theme Title	Description
Theme 1	Religious Understanding	Created and Chosen	Becoming aware of our uniqueness can help us open up to God who is the ground of our being and the One who loves us.
Theme 2	My Body	Appreciating Differences	Understanding our identity means appreciating male/female differences and learning to accept the invitation from God to root our identity in who he created us to be.
Theme 3	Emotional Well-Being	Feelings	Managing sexual feelings requires self-control, self-respect and patience.
Theme 4	Life Cycles	Before I Was Born	Contemplating life in the womb reveals that it is both beautiful and fragile.
Theme 5	Personal Relationships	Tough Relationships	In the real world of relationships, we can always be better at living with tolerance, kindness and forgiveness.
Theme 6	Keeping Safe	Think Before You Share	Image sharing and anything in word, speech or action that reduces people to objects dishonours their God-given dignity.
Theme 7	Wider World	Wider World	Recognizing the sin of unjust discrimination in our world helps us challenge and change our own behaviour in school and in our everyday life.

Year 9

	Focus	Theme Title	Description
Theme 1	Religious Understanding	The Search for Love	Beyond romantic feelings and desires, there is a deeper kind of love based on a decision to sacrifice for the good of the other.
Theme 2	My Body	Love People, Use Things	Consumerism can lead to objectification and this could cause us to treat people the way we treat things.
Theme 3	Emotional Well-Being	In Control of My Choices	Desire and attraction can affect the decisions made in relationships and effort and perseverance are needed to prevent them be dominated by lust.
Theme 4	Life Cycles	Fertility and Contraception	Fertility is a gift and responsibility and consideration is given to how methods for managing conception fit with God's plan for sex.
Theme 5	Personal Relationships	Commitment and Marriage	Commitment can take on many forms in different relationships, including sexual relationships and marriage.
Theme 6	Keeping Safe	Understanding Consent	Consent is not just gaining permission for something but involves complexities in both its giving and receiving.
Theme 7	Wider World	Human Rights - And Wrongs	Sexual exploitation brings to light our human rights and responsibilities and the ways they are violated by sexual harassment, assault and rape.

Year 10

	Focus	Theme Title	Description
Theme 1	Religious Understanding	Authentic Freedom	Making a loving gift of self is an ideal worth holding out for, one which leads to real freedom.
Theme 2	My Body	Self-Image	Understanding our dignity allows us to appreciate our bodies in the right way.
Theme 3	Emotional Well-Being	Beliefs, Values, Attitudes	Making good moral choices depends on building confidence, integrity and understanding.
Theme 4	Life Cycles	Parenthood	While we sometimes take parents for granted, parenthood impacts us in so many ways. It is the responsibility of a lifetime.
Theme 5	Personal Relationships	Pregnancy and Abortion	Pregnancy is an invitation to discover the challenge of responding with love to the gift of life.
Theme 6	Keeping Safe	Abuse	Abuse in relationships is incompatible with our dignity and calls for vigilance and compassion.
Theme 7	Wider World	Solidarity	Love means building peace and living in solidarity with all of God's creation, in particular the poor, marginalised and oppressed.

Year 11

	Focus	Theme Title	Description
Theme 1	Religious Understanding	Self-Worth	This theme invites students to consider how they respect themselves and others, and the role God can play within that.
Theme 2	My Body	Addiction	In this theme, students hear the story of Dina, who overcame severe drug addiction through the help of family, community, responsibility and faith.
Theme 3	Emotional Well-Being	Eating Disorders	This theme invites students to consider their own deepest needs and the complexities and contradictions within themselves.
Theme 4	Life Cycles	Birth Control	This theme holds fertility up as a precious gift to be protected, nurtured and valued.
Theme 5	Personal Relationships	Pornography	This theme looks at 'adult content' in an adult way: asking questions about how it affects people's behaviour, how it affects the way people think about themselves, others and their relationships.
Theme 6	Keeping Safe	STIs	In this theme, students meet Bobbi, who was raised in East London with strong Indian cultural values. She describes how she felt torn between two worlds: wanting to push boundaries, but also feeling a lot of pressure to not bring shame on her culture, her community and her family.
Theme 7	Wider World	Coercive Control	In this final theme of the Year 11 programme, Mairi and Nathan explain how we are a social species: isolation is not in our nature. Our longing for intimate, exclusive relationships is a beautiful thing, but one that can make us vulnerable.

Cinema-in-Education sessions

Sessions per programme	Session 1 Whole or half-year groups	Session 2 Whole or half-year groups	Session 3 Whole or half-year groups
Year 7	Facts of Life	Seeking and Offering Support	Looking in the Mirror
Year 8	The Trouble with Max	Trust the Truth – Part One	Trust the Truth – Part Two
Year 9	Love, Honour, Cherish	The Gift of Sex	The Gift of Self
Year 10	Babies	Responding to an Unexpected Pregnancy	Safe Sex or Save Sex?
Year 11	Truth and Lies	Truth or Lies – Part One	Truth or Lies – Part Two
Year 12	Common Room	Life in Sixth Form – Part One	Life in Sixth Form – Part Two
Year 13	Bakhita's Prayer	Understanding Human Trafficking	Taking Action