



Diocese of Plymouth Relationships and Sex Education Policy

April 2026

**Review Required September 2027 (or upon receipt
of new government guidance if sooner)**

*There is no separation between time for learning and time for
formation, between acquiring notions and growing in wisdom.' (The
Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium)*

**Diocese of Plymouth
Relationships and Sex Education Policy**

Diocesan Mission Statement

A Celebrating Church – Expressing what we believe in our worship, engaging with the gift of liturgy, and allowing ourselves to be renewed in it.

A Caring Church – Seeking to understand the sufferings of those around us, reaching out and being Christ to one another, and serving the world.

A Learning Church – Deepening our understanding of our faith, humbling ourselves to learn from Our Lord and each other, and discovering our true nature as the body of Christ.

A Living Church – Empowering all around us with the presence and joy of the Holy Spirit, proclaiming Christ to the world, and being faithful to our mission.

The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me.

He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour".

(Luke 4:8-19)

Our Values

The values which inspire our work and inform the ethos and decision-making in our schools are the values of the Gospel, based on the Beatitudes in the Gospel of Matthew (Chapter 5: 1-11). These values are usually presented to the school community at assemblies and liturgies and explored throughout the working week in the classroom. When we come to celebrate achievement in the school, we recognise first and foremost those who have witnessed to Gospel values, as well as recognising excellence in other areas.

The Beatitudes, according to the Catechism, "...depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity." In a very moving way, they sum up the essence of the transformed human being God calls us all to be in Jesus. These are the kind of persons and actions that are 'blessed' by God, this is the 'job description' of people living in God's kingdom, as opposed to the world's kingdom of selfishness, inequality, aggression, materialism and violence. They challenge each generation to reflect on what persons and actions they consider to be important or blessed.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"

Gospel value: Humility, seeing life as a gift

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted"

Gospel value: Compassion, empathy

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"

Gospel value: Kindness, gentleness

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" **Gospel value: Justice**, working for a fairer world

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy"

Gospel value: Forgiveness, reconciliation

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God"

Gospel value: Integrity, do what you say

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of

God” **Gospel value: Peace**, committed to peace making, non-violence

“Blessed are those who are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”

Gospel value: Courage, standing up for truth

Our schools adopted this common set of Gospel values and integrate them (alongside the Gospel Virtues) into the liturgical life and wider life of the school. Values and Virtues have been incorporated into the curriculum itself, so that we offer an education to our children ‘in the light of the Gospel’.

Additionally, our RSE programmes will promote those virtues which are essential in responding to 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.

DEFINING RELATIONSHIP AND SEX 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’¹.

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 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 adults’².

This would include the topics of families and the people who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships online relationships and being safe. 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).’³

1. Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE): Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 4

2. Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE): Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 19

3. Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE): Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 25

STATUTORY CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum for Science. (There is a separate document for maintained secondary schools to teach about HIV, AIDS and sexually transmitted infections.)

RATIONALE

We believe that every person is entitled to dignity and freedom, having been created in the image and likeness of God.

"I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full" (John 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.

While teaching from a Catholic perspective on the human person, the school adheres to statutory protections regarding gender identity. In line with the 2026 guidance, the school does not use materials that suggest a child's gender is 'fluid' or that encourage pupils to question their biological sex. We do not use resources that promote the concept of 'social transition' (changing names, pronouns, or clothing) as a neutral or harm-free act. Any discussion of gender will be handled with extreme sensitivity, prioritising the clinical safety and wellbeing of the child in partnership with parents.

Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales and as advocated by the CES, 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.

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.

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 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.

Policy Formation and Consultation Process

The Head Teacher in each of our schools has overall responsibility for implementing any policy. The following stages should be undertaken when applying this policy document:

- The Head Teacher should establish a working group in their own school comprising at least 1 teacher, 1 Teaching Assistant, 1 parent and 1 Governor, when/if it is

necessary to undertake any fundamental changes to practice or content through applying this or any policy updates.

- A new (or updated) RSE policy should ideally be reviewed with the Parish Priest present.
- The Lead Governor for RE and Catholic Life should present any fundamental changes in practice necessary because of policy changes to parents, alongside the Head Teacher and EPR/PSHE coordinator, delivered at a Parents' Focus Evening exploring relationships and sex education.
- *It is suggested (although not mandatory) that new parents are invited to an annually arranged RSE meeting so they are able to understand and support the teaching and rationale.*
- Resources should be made available for review and any parental concerns addressed
- The working group should provide in-service for teachers, teaching assistants and governors if using any new resources.
- The policy will be reviewed as soon as new DfE guidance is available if this occurs before the timetabled policy review date. This policy has been reviewed in-line with statutory guidance received in July 2025

(Use the **Assess your current curriculum audit in the appendix to help you identify what expectations you're meeting already, and what gaps you'll need to fill to bring your curriculum up to the new standards. Give each expectation a 'red, amber, green' (RAG) rating. Red can mean 'not currently taught at all', amber can be 'covered but not effectively or there are outstanding issues' and green can be 'covered effectively, no further work needed'),*

AIM OF RSE and the SCHOOL 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 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"⁴ 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;

4. *Gravissimum Educationis* 1

- 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.

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.

Outcomes

INCLUSION AND DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING

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), 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 OBLIGATIONS

The board and local governing board have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our schools strive 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.

This policy is updated to reflect the 2025/26 DfE Statutory Guidance. We are committed to a proactive safeguarding approach that addresses modern risks. This includes explicit instruction on the criminal nature of **AI-generated deepfakes**, the risks of **vaping**, and the importance of health protections such as **vaccinations and dental hygiene**.

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 a RSE 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 RSE (in secondary schools/academies relating to forced-marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion, the age of consent and legalisation 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.

BROAD CONTENT of RSE

Three aspects of RSE – attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal 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.

For Key Stages 3 & 4 our curriculum explicitly challenges online misogyny and the influence of "incel" (involuntary celibate) sub-cultures. We teach pupils to recognise how online influencers can promote harmful beliefs that lead to violence against women and girls. We also cover the risks of "sextortion" and how to navigate distorted sexual norms presented in online media and pornography.

In our schools we follow the Ten:Ten 'Life to the Full' RSE programme as recommended by the Diocese of Plymouth and approved by the Bishops of England and Wales. We strongly recommend that all staff and governors should register for their free online training and undertake regular update training, as provided by the Diocesan Education Service. Their ten principles for RSE in a Catholic school are:

1. Our bodies are good!

Saint John Paul II said: "The body - in fact, only the body - is capable of making visible what is invisible, the spiritual and the divine." We need our physical bodies in order to relate to others, to love others. In this quote, John Paul II highlights the dignity inherent in our physical bodies and the respect that they deserve; they make visible the invisible – the spiritual dimension of the human person. Let's put this another way. A human person does not have a body. The body expresses the person. We exist in a culture which attempts to depersonalise the body or reject the gift of the body in its entirety as part of the person. A Catholic RSE programme should resist this vision of the human person. This understanding of the body filters down into all areas of teaching within RSE: our physical health and hygiene, bodily autonomy, consent, puberty and physical changes, gender identity, menstruation and sexual intimacy. We are our bodies and our bodies are good!

2. As we grow in our loving relationships with others, we become close to the image and likeness of God.

We are 'made in the image and likeness of God'. But what does this mean? God is not one person. God is three persons – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. God is a relationship of love. If God is a relationship of love, then we are most in His image and likeness when we are in loving relationships. Where do we find that? Well, for many we become closer to the image and likeness of God through our families, through our close friendships, through our intimate relationships and when we reach out to others, even people we don't know, with love. Therefore, a Catholic RSE programme should enable children and young people to understand the deep truth that their loving relationships (with family members, friends, colleagues, boyfriends and girlfriends, spouses and neighbours, both local and global) offer them a path of spiritual growth and bring them closer to being in the image and likeness of God.

3. Catholic RSE should be about the whole person

According to the draft DfE guidance, a RSE programme that is fit-for-purpose must cover a wide-range of topics relevant to the lives and experiences of young people. It is easy to quickly scan through the statutory guidance and see 'hot topics' such as 'grooming', 'sexual exploitation', 'online abuse', 'sexual health' and 'gender identity' jumping out from the page. However, a Catholic RSE programme should not simply deliver these lessons in isolation; instead they should be addressed within a wider, holistic view of the human person, one whose deepest identity and dignity is rooted in God (see principle 5).

4. Catholic RSE should be taught in partnership with parents

One of the most distinctive features of a Catholic RSE programme should be emphasising the vital role that parents have in nurturing their children. In the document, "Who is responsible for teaching RSE?", the Catholic Education Service said this: "Parents are the first educators of their children. It is their right and responsibility to inform and educate their children in matters relating to human growth and development, particularly sexual development. Therefore, schools should always seek to work in partnership with parents and carers and the teaching offered by schools should complement and not replace their primary role. The Church has a special duty and right to educate as part of its mission, and a Catholic school is the principal means by which it assists parents in their duties." Parents have the right to withdraw their children from 'some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE' (DfE Guidance 46). However, within a Catholic RSE programme, it is imperative that schools work in partnership with parents, providing information and guidance, and a collaborative approach to the teaching of the subject.

5. Our deepest identity is as a child of God - created chosen and loved by God

Children and young people have a deep need for identity and belonging. In its most negative form, this can lead to a tribalistic culture, such as gang membership. It can also lead young people to finding security by labelling themselves, or being labelled by others, in terms of sexual orientation, gender, race, etc. However, our identity as a child of God is deeper than our own self-understanding, our modes of attraction, or the way our actions or behaviour can put us in a box. It's not that we should suppress or dismiss how anybody expresses or articulates their identity - it's that we help children and young people to develop a deeper and more meaningful understanding that they are called to holiness. Everyone, without exception, is called the same high calling. We may have different challenges and different obstacles to overcome, but everyone is called personally by name.

6. Story can change hearts and minds

One thing that makes a Catholic RSE programme so unique and different from any other

statutory subject is that it shouldn't just equip a child or young person with facts; it doesn't just present neutral or value-free information. It needs to do much more. It needs to speak to hearts and minds in order to elevate the social, moral, cultural and spiritual education of the student. For Ten Ten, the vehicle we use to speak into hearts and minds is **story**. As human beings, we often learn from mistakes. However, we don't need to live through difficult experiences in order to grow. We can live those experiences out vicariously through the art of story; by engaging with story, we can reflect on our life choices and how we might alter or change something for the better. Through story, children and young people can journey from watching a story – to understanding it – to relating their personal lives to what they've watched – and then making a commitment or action to change. This is the methodology that Ten Ten adopts in all of our resources.

7. Catholic RSE is an education in virtue In their guidance, the DfE refer to the development of 'character'. They talk about the development of resilience, perseverance, honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice. Within a Catholic context, we have a different name for it, a word which has a richer context: **virtue**. This is how the CES describe virtue: 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. So Catholic RSE is an education in virtuous habits, modelled by the teaching staff, and lived out at school and home. It's another way in which this statutory subject is different from, say, History or Science. Often those subjects are about knowledge to be applied in future work or studies. With RSE, you apply it now. It's not only about the future. It's about the here and now.

8. Catholic RSE is an education in conscience. Part of the challenge and joy of developing one's Christian faith is about discerning God's will. On the one hand, that's about vocation and our calling in life, but we're also called to discern God's will in the day-to-day decisions of life. Consciences need to be formed. A Catholic RSE programme should help a child or young person to discriminate between God's will and their own will. It takes a lifetime (and more) to grow and flourish into the fullness of our potential and we need God's help. Therefore, Catholic RSE should equip children and young people with guidance so that they can gradually discern the difference between what hinders – and what helps - their integral growth towards God; towards a deeper wholeness in Him.

9. Relationship Education is about striving for the Common Good It can be very easy to think of RSE as merely a programme in helping children and young people to understand 'sex' within the context of 'relationships' at an age-appropriate level throughout their education, but an education in relationships is much, much more than that. Nurturing these virtues and character naturally spill over into a desire to serve and love others, including the stranger. Relationship Education is about striving for the Common Good. The Catholic charity Together For the Common Good asks some challenging questions:

Are we creating conditions in which every individual in the community can flourish?

- Do we recognise the gift of the other, respecting different backgrounds and diversity of opinion?
- Do we treat everyone equally?
- Do we cherish difference and allow everyone to contribute?
- Are we caring well for our world, locally and globally, making the most of our finite resources?
- Do our decisions put the interests of the vulnerable, poor and excluded first?

10. Prayer and the Sacraments fuel the teaching Finally, we believe that it would be impossible to teach a Catholic RSE programme without the fuel that makes the motor run: prayer. A Catholic RSE programme has to have prayer, the Sacraments and the Word of

God at its foundation – creating opportunities for students, teachers and parents to develop their prayer life and grow in a deeper relationship with the person of Jesus.

Teaching strategies will include:

Establishing ground rules, distancing techniques, discussion, project learning, reflection, experiential, active, brainstorming, film and video, group work, role-play, trigger drawings, values clarification.

Learning in RSE will be assessed in line with the individual school's assessment policy.

PARENTS and CARERS

We recognise that parents (and other carers who stand in their place) are the primary educators of their children. As Catholic schools, 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 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.

Parents must be consulted before policy changes are ratified by the board or local governing bodies. They will have been consulted at every stage of the development of the current 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. As stated earlier, through regular consultation with new parents, our aim is that every parent and carer will have full confidence in the school's RSE programme to meet their child's needs.

To ensure full transparency as required by the 2026 guidance, all curriculum materials, including slide decks, worksheets, and external agency resources, are available for parents to view upon request. We guarantee that no 'commercial-in-confidence' clauses with external providers will prevent parents from viewing materials used to teach their children. A summary of the full year's curriculum overview will be published on the school website to allow parents to engage with the content in advance.

Parents 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.

We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw).

In accordance with the 2026 statutory guidance, if a parent requests that their child be withdrawn from sex education, the school will document the process clearly. This includes a record of the discussion with the parent, the specific reasons for the request, and the Headteacher's decision. The school will also provide a written plan for how the child will receive 'purposeful education' during the periods of withdrawal to ensure no loss of learning time.

RSE Content is shared with all parents annually and parents are reminded of key content each term before it is covered in their child's class, so that they can support and have the opportunity to ask questions.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHING THE PROGRAMME

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lays with the relevant curriculum staff; this will normally include science, RE, physical education, RSE and PSHE.

A group's usual teaching staff should be responsible for delivering the programme.

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.

External Visitors

Our schools 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'. 5

5. CES Checklist for External Speakers to Schools, 2016 5

Before any external speaker or agency is engaged, the school will conduct a full review of their materials to ensure they align with both the Diocesan values and the 2026 statutory guidance. Schools will not use any organization that refuses to share their teaching materials with parents.

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/Directors/Local Governing Body

- Consult on fundamental changes to RSE 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 the relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHE.

Head teacher

The head teacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for the liaison with the Governing Body, the Diocesan Education Service and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

PSHE/RE 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 dissemination

of the information relating to the RSE and the provision of in-service training. (They must be supported by the curriculum deputy and the member of staff with responsibility for child protection).

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.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

The 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, Bullying policy, Safeguarding policy etc.).

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 in the RSE audit.

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

Our governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE 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.

Teachers will answer questions in an age-appropriate and factually accurate manner, guided by the Catholic ethos of the school. If a question is deemed too sexually explicit or not age-appropriate for the class, the teacher will acknowledge the question but decline to answer it in a group setting. In such cases, the school will notify the parents so that the question can be addressed at home, ensuring the primary role of parents as educators is respected.

Controversial or Sensitive issues

There will always be controversial or sensitive issues in the field of RSE. These may be a 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 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 hint 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 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 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 the pupil 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 pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING

The 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 those 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.

Links to Other Policies and Statutory Guidance

This policy should be read with reference to:

- The Plymouth CAST Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- The latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education
- The latest version of the DfE Statutory Guidance for Relationships Education Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

Useful resources

- 1) A model Catholic Primary RSE curriculum CES 2020
- 2) A model Catholic Secondary RSE curriculum Autumn 2020 Life to the Full- An annual subscription providing Catholic schools with a fully-resourced programme of study in Relationship Education.
- 3) Life to the Full- An annual subscription providing Catholic schools with a fully-resourced programme of study in Relationship Education.
<https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/relationship-education-subscribers/relationship-education/>
- 4) A Journey in Love: Volume 1 Primary Volume 2 Secondary Sr Jude Groden McCrimmons publishing

For the most current and up to date RSE guidance materials and policy documentation please use the following CES link; <http://catholiceducation.org.uk/guidance-for-schools/relationship-sex-education>

Appendix 1

Disclosures During Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Lessons

The school recognises that Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education may increase the likelihood of pupils making disclosures or asking questions that raise safeguarding concerns.

Staff must therefore teach RSE in a way that is safe, calm, age-appropriate and trauma-aware. They should be alert to signs that a pupil may be describing abuse, neglect, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, domestic abuse, self-harm, suicidal ideation, or other welfare concerns, whether relating to themselves or to another child. Staff should also be aware that some pupils may not be ready to disclose, may not recognise their experiences as harmful, or may communicate concerns indirectly through questions, behaviour, distress or partial information.

In line with KCSiE 2025, and consistently reflected in the draft KCSiE 2026 consultation text, staff must never promise a pupil confidentiality if a safeguarding concern is raised. Staff should listen carefully, respond calmly, avoid leading questions, reassure the pupil that they have been taken seriously, and explain that the information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to help keep them safe, normally the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a deputy. Any safeguarding concern arising in or following an RSE lesson must be passed to the DSL or deputy without delay and recorded in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Teachers should not attempt to investigate, resolve or manage disclosures alone within the

lesson. Where appropriate, they may use a brief “holding” response, bring the lesson to a safe close, and ensure the pupil is supported discreetly after the lesson. The statutory RSE guidance also expects schools to be clear in advance how difficult questions will be handled, how confidentiality will be explained to pupils, and how external visitors will report any safeguarding concern in line with the school’s policy. When planning RSE lessons staff will anticipate triggers for difficult questions or statements, and include how they will be handled. This will include availability of other staff to support the child outside the classroom etc if Required.

Where a disclosure is made, or sensitive information disclosed, the member of staff should support the other children in the maintenance of sensitivity and care, and where necessary provide a supportive debrief.

The DSL should ensure that all staff and visitors delivering RSE receive appropriate safeguarding briefing. This will include, but not be limited to, planning for anticipated disclosures or questions, preparation with children (cohort and individuals) for specific lessons, how to deal with sensitive questions and disclosures within a lesson, what to look out for in specific sessions, and how to make record/report a disclosure or concern. Staff must ensure that pupils are helped to understand, before sensitive teaching begins, that adults in school cannot offer unconditional confidentiality and that concerns about safety will be acted upon in their best interests. This section should be read alongside the Trust’s RSE Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Online Safety arrangements, and the procedures set out in this Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy.