St Mary's
Catholic Primary School

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Including Health Education and PSHE

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1. SCHOOL MISSION

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, our Mission is:

TO LOVE GOD ABOVE ALL THINGS
BY
LEARNING TOGETHER
LOVING OURSELVES
LOVING EACH OTHER
LOVING ALL PEOPLE
LOVING LIFE ITSELF
AND
CONSTANTLY STRIVING FOR
EXCELLENCE
WORTHY OF OUR GOD GIVEN GIFTS.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

'I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL' (John 10: 10)

Jesus Christ is at the centre of life at St Mary's. Our Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), Health Education and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) support the education of the whole child. Children learn to value their God-given dignity, build caring relationships, understand their developing bodies, make informed choices and seek help when they need it. The programme promotes the virtues of faithfulness, integrity, prudence, mercy, compassion, respect and responsibility, helping children grow in loving relationships with God, themselves and others.

We use Ten Ten's Life to the Full Plus to support our planned RSE and Health Education and wider PSHE curriculum. Picture News and carefully selected pastoral resources extend learning and enable teachers to respond to current events and the needs of individual children, classes and the school.

Our Catholic approach promotes love, faithfulness, integrity, mercy, compassion and respect for the human person. These virtues are explored at an age-appropriate level through self-respect, responsibility and care for others. Every child and family is treated with dignity, whatever their circumstances, faith or beliefs.

3. POLICY SCOPE AND AIMS

This policy explains our provision from Reception to Year 6, including resources, parental consent and withdrawal. Relationships, Sex and Health Education is often abbreviated nationally to RSHE. For clarity, we use "RSE and Health Education" throughout this policy. At primary school, Relationships Education and Health Education are compulsory; additional sex education is optional. PSHE includes these areas and wider personal, social and economic learning. "Parents" includes carers and others with parental responsibility.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Curriculum, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Online Safety, Behaviour, SEND, Accessibility, Mental Health, Religious Education (RE), EYFS and Complaints policies, as well as relevant curriculum plans and year-group overviews.

We aim to help children:

• recognise their own worth and the dignity and rights of others, expressing kindness, respect and responsibility in everyday life;

• develop healthy friendships, communicate feelings and boundaries, manage disagreement and recognise harmful behaviour;

• understand physical and emotional development through accurate, age-appropriate information;

• develop habits that support physical health, emotional wellbeing and a healthy relationship with the online world;

• recognise risk, resist inappropriate pressure and confidently seek help for themselves or others;

• participate thoughtfully in their community, consider different views and prepare for the next stage of education.

Our Building the Kingdom approach, Catholic Social Teaching and Rights Respecting commitment connect this learning with dignity, the common good and service. Children's right to be heard informs curriculum development; their right to protection underpins teaching and safeguarding practice.

4. STATUTORY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE

St Mary's has regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, published in July 2025 and effective from 1 September 2026. This policy reflects that guidance. The governing body oversees compliance and reviews provision regularly.

The policy is informed by:

- The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships Education compulsory for primary pupils and Health Education compulsory in maintained schools and academies.
- The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 provide the relevant curriculum framework. The statutory guidance is issued under section 403 of the Education Act 1996 and section 80A of the Education Act 2002. The parental withdrawal arrangements applying at St Mary's are explained in sections 5 and 8.
- Current safeguarding guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children, alongside the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- The Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice, and the EYFS Statutory Framework, which support inclusive practice and equal access to learning.

Catholic teaching and diocesan expectations also inform our approach. The approved policy is published on the school website and a printed copy is available free of charge on request.

5. CURRICULUM ENTITLEMENT AND WITHDRAWAL

Parents cannot withdraw their child from Relationships Education, Health Education or National Curriculum science. This includes compulsory teaching about puberty, menstruation, correct

body-part names and keeping safe. Parents can withdraw their child from some or all of our additional sex education in Year 6.

Area	What it covers	Parental withdrawal
Relationships Education	Families, friendships, respect, boundaries, online relationships, recognising harm and seeking help.	No right of withdrawal.
Health Education	Physical and emotional health, safety, correct body-part names, puberty and menstruation.	No right of withdrawal.
National Curriculum science	The prescribed science content, including body parts, growth and relevant reproduction content.	No right of withdrawal.
Optional sex education in Year 6	Additional teaching about human reproduction and conception beyond compulsory science, through the agreed Life to the Full lessons.	Explicit parental consent is required by school policy. Withdrawal requests must be granted.
Wider PSHE	Economic wellbeing, citizenship, decision-making, aspirations and wider personal development.	No general statutory right to withdraw from PSHE. The sex education right applies to any optional sex education within it.

6. PROGRAMME AND CURRICULUM PLANNING

Life to the Full Plus

Life to the Full Plus is the school's main programme for RSE and Health Education and wider PSHE. It follows a spiral curriculum, revisiting key themes and knowledge as children progress through the school. Staff check the programme against current statutory requirements and supplement it where needed.

RSE and Health Education and wider PSHE are taught fortnightly, in line with the school's Curriculum Policy Statement. Class teachers deliver the curriculum, supported by the subject leader, and additional teaching opportunities are used where needed to reinforce learning. The curriculum is further supported through RE, Science, Computing, PE, assemblies and the wider life of the school.

The subject leader maintains year-group curriculum overviews showing when statutory content is taught and revisited. These distinguish Relationships Education, Health Education and National Curriculum science from optional sex education, so parents can see which lessons carry a right of withdrawal.

Picture News and responsive PSHE

Picture News supports discussion of current affairs, British Values, children's rights and the wider world. The school also uses PSHE lessons to respond to emerging needs, such as friendships, bereavement, change, online safety and local or national events. Resources are carefully selected to ensure they are age-appropriate, accurate and consistent with the school's Catholic ethos.

School leaders, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), regularly review pupil needs, feedback and safeguarding information to ensure the curriculum remains relevant and effective.

Where necessary, teaching may be adapted by revisiting topics, adjusting the timing of lessons or providing additional support. These adaptations do not replace or reduce pupils' entitlement to the planned curriculum.

Where significant changes involve sensitive content, parents will be informed and given access to relevant resources. Any safeguarding concerns will be managed in line with the school's safeguarding procedures. Teachers present information factually and objectively and ensure that any political issues are discussed in a balanced and age-appropriate manner.

7. CONTENT AND PROGRESSION

Reception

Learning begins through EYFS personal, social and emotional development, communication and language, physical development and the wider curriculum. Children learn about feelings, friendship, turn-taking, caring relationships, basic hygiene, privacy, boundaries and asking adults for help. Stories, play, discussion and modelling make learning concrete.

Key Stages 1 and 2

Children revisit core ideas and develop increasingly secure vocabulary, reasoning and practical skills. Year-group planning specifies when learning is introduced and revisited; the overview below summarises the entitlement by the end of primary school.

Area	Progressive learning
Relationships	Family care and different family structures; making and maintaining friendships; loneliness; kindness and respect; resolving conflict; boundaries; stereotypes and bullying; recognising unsafe relationships and seeking help.
Online safety and awareness	Respectful behaviour; harmful content and contact; people pretending to be someone else; privacy and location settings; age restrictions; pressure to share information or images; the lasting circulation of material and how to report concerns.
General wellbeing	Emotional vocabulary and self-regulation; self-care, interests, friendship, activity and rest; loneliness; change, loss and bereavement; knowing when and where to seek support. Everyday sadness or worry is distinguished from a mental health condition.
Wellbeing online	Balancing online and in-person life; screen use; age-restricted apps and games; gaming purchases and financial harms; scams; critical evaluation of information, targeting and personal data; the effects of bullying and harassment.
Physical health	Exercise and fitness; healthy eating and a positive relationship with food; risks associated with drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping and nicotine; sleep, oral health, hygiene, sun safety, illness, vaccination and immunisation.
Personal safety and first aid	Recognising hazards including fire; road, rail and water safety; basic first aid including head injuries; making an effective emergency call and getting help rather than filming an incident.

Area	Progressive learning
Developing bodies	Growth and the human lifecycle; accurate body-part names, including penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum and nipples; privacy; physical and emotional changes of puberty; the menstrual cycle and practical support.
Wider PSHE	Money, needs and wants, saving and spending, responsible choices, aspirations, work, community participation, rights and responsibilities, British Values and care for others and creation.

Puberty and menstruation are taught in good time to prepare children before changes occur. Staff recognise that periods can begin from around age eight. Teaching is supported by discreet access to period products, appropriate facilities and a trusted adult.

8. OPTIONAL SEX EDUCATION IN YEAR 6

St Mary's provides additional sex education in Year 6 through *Life to the Full*. This goes beyond the National Curriculum science content on reproduction and is taught within a Catholic understanding of love, dignity, commitment and family life. It aims to prepare pupils for secondary education in an age-appropriate way.

Parents will be informed in advance about the content, timing and resources through a School Gateway letter before the programme is taught. The school will seek explicit parental consent for this optional sex education. Consent may be withdrawn at any time before or during the programme.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from some or all of this additional sex education by informing the school or by not providing consent on the form sent home.

The headteacher will grant any request for withdrawal. Suitable alternative learning will be provided for pupils who are withdrawn. The right to withdraw applies only to this additional sex education and does not apply to Relationships Education, Health Education or National Curriculum Science, which are compulsory for all pupils

9. PARENTS AND CARERS AS PARTNERS

We recognise parents as the first educators of their children and work in partnership with them. Parent workshops provide opportunities to understand the RSE and Health Education programme, explore resources, ask questions and discuss how to support learning at home.

Parents can view Life to the Full materials online through the Parent Portal using the school login and password shared with families. All teaching materials used for RSE and Health Education are available to parents on request.

Parents receive advance information about sensitive lessons and Year 6 optional sex education, including content, timing and withdrawal arrangements. The school welcomes feedback. Concerns should be raised initially with the class teacher, subject leader or headteacher and, if necessary, through the school's complaints procedure.

10. BALANCED CURRICULUM

In line with Catholic teaching and statutory guidance, pupils receive accurate and age-appropriate factual information. Learning enables children to explore different viewpoints respectfully while understanding the Catholic understanding of human dignity, relationships and family life. Presenting information and discussing differing views does not constitute promotion of any particular lifestyle or behaviour.

We ensure that pupils have access to the knowledge and skills they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights and responsibilities. Teaching reflects the school's Catholic ethos while helping children develop respect, critical thinking and understanding of the world around them.

11. TEACHING AND A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

RSE and Health Education are taught in a safe, respectful and age-appropriate way. Teachers use a range of approaches, including stories, videos, discussion, scenarios and opportunities for reflection, helping children develop confidence in communicating their thoughts and feelings. Oracy is used to support listening, respectful discussion and understanding different perspectives.

Staff teach the agreed curriculum objectively and professionally, without promoting personal views. Ground rules help create a positive learning environment where children treat each other with respect, listen carefully and understand that they are never expected to share personal or family experiences.

Children can ask questions in a variety of ways, including privately where appropriate. Teachers use scenarios and examples rather than personal disclosures to explore sensitive topics safely.

Staff are mindful that some content may affect children differently and will provide appropriate support where needed. Any concerns, worries or disclosures are handled sensitively and in line with the school's safeguarding procedures. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils feel safe, supported and able to participate in learning.

12. INCLUSION AND EQUALITY

Every child is valued as a unique person, made in the image and likeness of God. We want all children to feel safe, respected and included in their learning.

Teaching is appropriate to children's age, understanding and individual needs. Staff work with parents, the SENDco and the safeguarding team to adapt teaching, resources and support so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), can participate successfully.

Children learn about a variety of families and relationships and the importance of love, care, commitment and belonging. Families may include one parent, grandparents as carers, adoptive families, families with two mums or two dads, and other family structures. Every child and family is treated with dignity and respect.

Our teaching is rooted in the Catholic faith and its understanding of marriage and family life. We explain Catholic beliefs and legal facts clearly, meeting our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and statutory guidance. The curriculum helps children understand and challenge bullying, discrimination, prejudice and harassment, including online

13. SAFEGUARDING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Safeguarding is at the heart of our curriculum and school life. Through RSE and Health Education, children learn about healthy relationships, personal boundaries, bullying, online safety, consent, privacy and how to seek help from trusted adults.

Children are taught that abuse is never their fault and that they should speak to a trusted adult if they feel worried, unsafe or uncomfortable. They are encouraged to keep asking for help until they are listened to.

Staff follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures. Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. If information suggests a child may be at risk of harm, it will be shared in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures. Children will be informed, where appropriate, about any action that needs to be taken to keep them safe. Staff listen calmly, take concerns seriously and report them promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a deputy. They do not investigate disclosures themselves or promise secrecy, and explain sensitively that information may need to be shared to keep a child safe.

Information is shared with those who need it to protect and support the child. The DSL coordinates the response, including referrals where needed. Parents are normally involved, unless this could increase risk to the child or compromise safeguarding enquiries; decisions follow safeguarding procedures and advice from relevant agencies.

The school's Catholic ethos promotes forgiveness and reconciliation while recognising that children should never be expected to accept harm, remain in unsafe situations or ignore behaviour that places them at risk.

14. CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS AND SENSITIVE ISSUES

Children's questions are welcomed and treated with sensitivity and respect. Teachers provide accurate, age-appropriate answers that are consistent with the school's agreed curriculum and Catholic ethos.

Questions outside the planned curriculum, or about optional content from which a child has been withdrawn, are handled sensitively rather than answered in detail in front of the class. Staff may defer an answer, consult the subject leader or DSL and discuss an appropriate response with parents where safe. They respect withdrawal arrangements while still providing necessary safeguarding support.

Children are never required to share personal experiences, and staff do not discuss their own personal lives when teaching RSE and Health Education.

Any question or disclosure that raises a safeguarding concern will be followed up in line with the school's safeguarding procedures. Sensitive issues are always handled carefully, respectfully and with the welfare of the child as the highest priority.

15. RESOURCES AND EXTERNAL VISITORS

The subject leader regularly reviews Life to the Full Plus and other RSE and Health Education resources to ensure they remain accurate, age-appropriate, inclusive and compliant with statutory guidance. Additional resources, including those from external organisations, are evaluated for suitability, safeguarding and consistency with the school's Catholic ethos and this policy. Staff always review videos, websites and online content before sharing them with pupils.

External visitors and specialists may contribute to aspects of the programme, but overall responsibility for the curriculum remains with the school. Leaders review proposed content and resources in advance and ensure they support the aims of the curriculum. Visitors are expected to follow the school's safeguarding procedures, values and expectations, and a member of school staff will always be present during sessions. External contributions are used to enhance, not replace, the planned teaching programme.

16. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Governors approve and review the policy, ensure statutory requirements are met, uphold the school's Catholic ethos, and monitor the impact of provision, including arrangements for parental information and withdrawal requests.
- The Headteacher is responsible for the overall implementation of the policy, including staffing, curriculum organisation, resources, parental engagement, consent and withdrawal arrangements, and the use of external providers.
- The RSE/PSHE Subject Leader oversees RSE and Health Education and wider PSHE planning, supports staff, monitors resources and coverage, coordinates parent information opportunities, and evaluates the quality and impact of provision.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) advises on safeguarding matters, supports staff with sensitive issues, and ensures concerns or disclosures are managed in line with safeguarding procedures.
- The SENDco supports inclusion by advising on appropriate adaptations and ensuring pupils with SEND can access the curriculum successfully.
- Teachers and Support Staff deliver the agreed curriculum, assess pupil understanding, communicate with families where appropriate, and support pupils' participation and wellbeing.

All staff receive appropriate training and professional development to ensure they are confident in delivering the curriculum, responding to children's questions, meeting safeguarding responsibilities and promoting inclusion.

17. ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

Assessment helps teachers understand what pupils know, remember and can apply. A range of approaches, including discussion, questioning, observation and learning activities, are used to check understanding and inform future teaching. Assessment focuses on learning and understanding rather than pupils' personal beliefs or family circumstances.

The school values pupil voice and gathers feedback through discussions, class activities and age-appropriate surveys. This helps leaders understand how pupils experience the curriculum, whether they feel safe and included, and whether they know how to seek help when needed.

The subject leader 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. Findings are used to inform curriculum development, staff training and school improvement, and are shared with governors as appropriate.

The programme is evaluated through feedback from pupils, parents, staff and governors. Findings are used to inform curriculum development, policy review and school improvement priorities.

18. POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

This policy is reviewed every two years by the headteacher, subject leader and governors, with input from staff, pupils and parents. It will be reviewed sooner if there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance, diocesan expectations or school circumstances.

The governing body considers consultation feedback before approving any revisions. Updated policies and significant changes are communicated to staff and families.

REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

The following sources support this policy:

DfE Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education — guidance effective September 2026

DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

National Curriculum in England — primary curriculum

Equality Act 2010

SEND Code of Practice

Ten Ten Resources — programme and parent information