

St. John Fisher Catholic High School

RSHE POLICY

Designated Teacher: Mr Steve Mort

Adopted: September 2025

Review Period: Every 3 Years

Review Date: September 2028

RELATIONSHIPS, SEX EDUCATION AND HEALTH (RSHE) POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of St John Fisher catholic High School is to provide a process of teaching and learning, which seeks the reality of Christ. His values, ideals and teachings lie at the centre of our relationships and activities.

To this end we seek to create a true Community of Faith and Place of Learning.

OUR PURPOSE

This policy provides guidance and information on all aspects of relationships and sex education (RSHE) and aims to provide a secure framework within which staff will work. As a Catholic school we understand that all our students are of intrinsic and absolute value as they are created in the image and likeness of God. With this at the centre of all our teaching, and our RSHE provision, we aim to ensure our teaching is holistic and meets the needs of all students.

The RSHE programme at St John Fisher is underpinned by the following church teachings:

- the dignity and worth of each person made in the image of God
- the importance of individuals coming together in mutual support and regard, to live and work for the good of humankind and the glory of God.

DEFINING RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION

The Department for Education (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**. RSHE is about the development of the pupil's knowledge and understanding 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 of themselves as a sexual being. In secondary schools, RSHE 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)." **2**

STATUTORY CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

It is a statutory requirement for all secondary schools to teach relationship and sex education. It is also a requirement that all schools provide health education. Although the statutory requirements do not apply to 16-19 schools, the DFE also encourages 16 -19 schools to offer opportunities for students to study health, relationships and sex education.

This policy has been developed in consultation with governors, staff, students and parents.

OUR RATIONALE

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 RSHE 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. Because 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. RSHE, therefore, is 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), RSHE is firmly embedded within the entire curriculum as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social, and intellectual development of students. It is centred on Christ's vision of being human as good news and is positive and prudent, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.

All RSHE is delivered in accordance with the Church's moral teaching. It emphasises the central importance of marriage and the family whilst acknowledging that all students have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from. It also prepares pupils for life in modern Britain.

VALUES AND VIRTUES

Our RSHE 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 cardinal and theological virtues are explicitly explored and promoted along with the moral virtues of honesty, respect, and compassion.

THE AIM OF RSHE

Our Catholic mission commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSHE is an integral part of this education. In partnership with parents, we commit to provide children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education"**3** which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

INCLUSION AND PERSONALISED LEARNING

The school ensures RSHE is sensitive to the different needs of individual students in respect to 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. Lessons help students 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.

ENTITLEMENT AND EQUALITIES
Our school will ensure that the needs of all students are met and that all students understand the importance of equality and respect.

CURRICULUM PROVISION AND DELIVERY
Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, the school ensures that students are offered a balanced programme by providing a RSHE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. Students receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSHE (in secondary schools relating to forced-marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion, the age of consent and legislation relating to equality). Knowing about facts and enabling young people to explore differing viewpoints is not the same as promoting behaviour and is compatible with our school's promotion of Catholic teaching.

The school ensures students have access to the learning they require to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals. The RSHE programme will be provided in three inter-related ways: the whole school / ethos dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific relationships and sex curriculum taught through a range of subjects.

Key Stage 3 RSHE – All students are taught from Years 7 to 13 that we are made in the image and likeness of God and are all part of the body of Christ. Therefore, our vocation in life is to become more fully like Christ in ourselves and through our relationships with others. Key Stage 3 RSHE is taught across different subject areas.

In KS3 Religious Education, these ideas are explored in the RED curriculum units on creation and covenant and ends of the earth.

The process of conception and fertility issues and pregnancy are also studied as part of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. In PSHCE, students in Years 7 and 8 discuss the importance of team - work, bullying and peer pressure. Students learn about the importance of establishing and maintaining healthy relationships and a healthy lifestyle. They also learn how to recognise unhealthy relationships and how to respond to inappropriate contact and keeping safe. Other aspects of the RSHE programme of study are delivered through Drama and English.

In addition, students will be enabled to make well informed positive choices for themselves. At Key Stage 3 students will build on the health and wellbeing education received at primary school. Students will begin to understand how their bodies are changing, and how they are feeling. Students will know about mental wellbeing and internet safety and harm. The importance of physical health, fitness and healthy eating will also be emphasised. Students will also begin to know basic first aid.

Key Stage 4 RSHE – The very nature of Religious Education subject lends itself to the spiritual dimension of humanity. RSHE is taught within the context of Roman Catholic teaching about the dignity of the human person and the significance of relationships in the development of the human person. At Key Stage 4, pupils study aspects of RSHE as part of the Religious Education curriculum such as marriage, abortion, teenage pregnancy, abstinence, family life, sex, issues surrounding sexuality, civil marriage ceremonies, divorce, annulment, abortion, and euthanasia.

All these topics are taught in the light of the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. In Science, all students learn about the menstrual cycle, fertility treatments and the use of hormone treatments to aid fertility. Students who have opted to take Health and Social Care (as an option at GCSE) discuss personal relationships and development. In PSHCE, students learn about healthy relationships and how to resolve conflict within relationships. They study what it means to live a healthy lifestyle, the impact of substance abuse on relationships and the importance of having a positive body image. Being safe online and the opportunities and risks of forming and conducting online relationships, extremism, intolerance, and the importance of community cohesion are also explored. Other aspects of the RSHE programme of study are delivered through Drama and English. In addition, pupils will revisit and study in greater depth aspects of health education taught at KS3.

Key Stage 5 RSHE – Students studying Religious Studies A Level look at the developments in ethical thought and how the study of ethics has over time influenced beliefs and practices surrounding the issue of sexual ethics. All Sixth Form students follow the General RE programme which covers parts of the RSHE curriculum. Those pupils studying Health and Social Care post 16 learn about the anatomy and physiology of the human body, the reproductive system, care practice and provision. Other aspects of RSHE are covered using external agencies and speakers.

APPROACHES TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

Effective teaching and learning of RSHE is synonymous with effective teaching across the whole curriculum. Skills, attitudes, and behaviours are developed more if a variety of teaching strategies are utilised. All teachers are encouraged to develop the following teaching and learning methods to allow pupils to explore issues:

- clear learning objectives
- the use of ICT
- setting of ground rules and confidentiality
- discussion and debate
- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques
- working with external agencies
- reflection and review
- a range of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning activities
- making children feel secure in their opinions and asking of questions
- recognising and rewarding achievement.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All lessons, especially those in the RSHE programme, have the best interests of students 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.

The school promotes a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSHE can take place and ensure that students 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 students. There will be sensitive and/or controversial issues in the field of RSHE. 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. Students are protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSHE programme. Students are also encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in RSHE lessons. 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. Teachers will support students who are facing personal difficulties, this will be in line with the school's child protection and safeguarding policy.

Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to respond to during lessons ordinary class time, e.g., where a students, comments or questions hint at abuse, are deliberately tendentious or of a personal nature. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue. All teachers are made aware of the school's guidelines on confidentiality and disclosure. The boundaries around confidentiality are made explicit to learners. If a member of staff has any concerns about a student, it is shared immediately with one of the designated child protection officers. All governors, all teachers, all support staff, all parents and all pupils are aware of this policy, particularly as it relates to issues of advice and confidentiality.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, ASSESSMENT

The Head teacher, RSHCE coordinator, PSHCE coordinator and Heads of Department of Religious Education and Science are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate aspects of RSHE are taught within their curriculum areas. Observations of lessons take place in accordance with the school's quality assurance protocol and feedback is given to teachers. Evidence also includes the scrutiny of students work, students voice and staff voice. A yearly audit of provision also takes place.

To be successful independent learners, students require regular opportunities to reflect on, and identify what they have learned, what needs to be learned next and what they need to do to continue their learning. Teachers also need to be clear about the progress and achievements of the students they teach, and how their learning might be improved. However, the personal nature of RSHE means that it cannot always be assessed in a formal way. Students can reflect on their own learning and personal experiences. The process of assessment has a positive impact on young people's self-awareness and self-esteem. In RSHE opportunities are provided for students to record learning and progress in different ways

EXTERNAL VISITORS

The school will often call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSHE. Such visits 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 the Catholic Education Service (CES) guidance 'Checklist for External Speakers to Schools' **4.** 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 should ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Headteacher, PSHCE coordinator and RSHCE coordinator are responsible for the specific relationships and sex education programme and are supported by the relevant curriculum staff. However, all staff are involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSHE programme. They are role models for students of good, healthy, wholesome relationships between- staff and staff, and staff and students. They also contribute to the development of students' personal and social skills.

GOVERNORS

- ratify the RSHE policy, in consultation with relevant stakeholders
- ensure the policy is available to parents and carers
- ensure the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g., SEND, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs
- ensure 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 the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSHE within specified curriculum areas.

HEADTEACHER

The Headteacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, Diocese of Leeds and the Local Education Authority, and other relevant external agencies.

The PSHE coordinator, RSHE coordinator and Heads of Department for Religious Education and Science, with the Headteacher, have a general responsibility to support other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to RSHE and the provision of in-service training.

RSHE is a whole school priority. 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 students. Teachers are expected to teach RSHE in accordance with the Catholic ethos of the school. Appropriate training is made available for all staff teaching RSHE.

PARENTS AND CARERS

The school recognises that parents and carers 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, parents/carers are

informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSHE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their child's learning.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

Parents and carers continue to have the right to withdraw their children from sex education except in those elements which are required by the national curriculum in science.

Parents will continue to have a right to request to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSHE in secondary schools which, unless there are exceptional circumstances, should be granted up to three terms before their child turns 16. Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the head teacher in writing.

Before granting any such request it is good practice for the head teacher to discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the RSHE curriculum. The school will document this process to ensure a record is kept. If the child themselves wishes to receive sex education (rather than be withdrawn), the school should provide this during one of the 3 terms before the child turns 16 - the legal age of sexual consent.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education as the contents of these subjects e.g., family, friendship, safety (including online safety) – are important for all children to be taught.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

This policy supports and complements the following policies:

- Anti-bullying
- ICT acceptable use
- Safeguarding and Child protection
- PSHE Policy

DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

All teachers and governors have access to this policy. A copy is available on the school website and can be provided for parents/careers on request.

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy is reviewed at least every three years, or when there are statutory updates to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of students, staff, and parents, in line with current Department for Education advice and guidance.

1.Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 4 published by the DfE. 2. Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 25 published by the DfE. 3. Declaration on Christian Education, Gravissimum Educationis (1) proclaimed by his Holiness Pope Paul VI October 28,1965 4. CES Checklist for External Speakers to Schools, 2016