Relationships Sex and Health Education Policy

Academic year 2026 to 2027

Love • Respect • Service • Ambition

Review completed 26 October 2026. Next planned review October 2027, or earlier following relevant change.

Policy owner: Headteacher and RSHE Lead. Approval authority: Local Governing Body under the Trust scheme of delegation.

Status: Revised for approval. Approval date and effective date are to be recorded by the authorised body on ratification.

This edition updates the supplied policy for 2026–27. Existing legal duties apply irrespective of the policy approval date. Staff must follow current safeguarding and safety procedures while approval is completed.

Statement of intent

At Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust, we understand the importance of educating pupils about sex, relationships and their health, for them to make responsible and well-informed decisions in their lives. This policy is underpinned by our school values of Love, Ambition, Respect and Service.

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." It is about the development of the pupils' knowledge and understanding of her or himself 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. At Sacred Heart Catholic Academy we believe our role is to support parents and carers in the education of young people in these matters.

It is our aim that through the teaching of RSE pupils have a sound understanding of their dignity as an individual and can appreciate and respect the dignity of others in nurturing relationships of all kinds.

The teaching of RSHE can help to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. It allows us to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and in the wider society. However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

'I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL'

(Jn.10.10)

We are involved in relationships and sex education precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. The belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in a Catholic school. Our approach to RSE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals.

At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity; Father, Son and Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation. As a consequence of the Christian belief that we are made in the image and likeness of God, gender and sexuality are seen as God's gift, reflect God's beauty, and share in the divine creativity. RSE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationship as it is there that sexuality grows and develops.

RSE will be predominantly 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. 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, and support will be provided to help pupils deal with different sets of values

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.

This policy outlines how the school's RSHE curriculum is organised and delivered, to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education 2026'
- DfE (2021) 'Teaching about relationships, sex and health'
- DfE 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education', revised guidance effective from 1 September 2026
- DfE (2015) 'National curriculum in England: science programmes of study'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Technology Acceptable Terms of Use Agreement

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes.
- Ensuring the RSHE curriculum is well-led, effectively managed and well-planned.
- Evaluating the quality of provision through regular and effective self-evaluation.
- Ensuring that teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND.
- Providing clear information to parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn.
- Ensuring RSHE is resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures the school can fulfil its legal obligations.
- Maintaining and developing the religious ethos of the school.

- Creating and keeping up-to-date a separate written statement of this policy and ensuring the statement is published on the school's website and provided free of charge to anyone who requests it.

The Headteacher will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring all staff are suitably trained to deliver the subjects.
- Ensuring parents are fully informed of this policy.
- Maintaining and developing the religious ethos of the school.
- Reviewing all requests to withdraw pupils from sex-education elements of the statutory RSE curriculum.
- Discussing withdrawal requests with parents, and the pupil if appropriate, to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum, including the benefits of receiving the education.
- Ensuring withdrawn pupils receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.
- Encouraging parents to be involved in consultations regarding reviews of the school's RSHE curriculum.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Reporting to the governing board on the effectiveness of this policy and the curriculum.

The RSHE subject leader will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the delivery of RSHE.
- Working closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure the RSHE curriculum compliments, and does not duplicate, the content covered in other curriculum subjects.
- Ensuring the curriculum is age-appropriate and of high quality.
- Maintaining and developing the religious ethos of the school.
- Reviewing changes to the RSHE curriculum and advising on their implementation.
- Monitoring the learning and teaching of RSHE, providing support to staff where necessary.
- Ensuring the continuity and progression between each year group.
- Helping to develop colleagues' expertise in the subject.
- Ensuring teachers are provided with adequate resources to support teaching of the curriculum.
- Ensuring the school meets its statutory requirements in relation to RSHE.
- Leading staff meetings and ensuring all members of staff involved in the curriculum have received the appropriate training.
- Organising, providing and monitoring CPD opportunities in the subject.
- Ensuring the correct standards are met for recording and assessing pupil performance.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the subjects and providing reports to the Headteacher.

The school Chaplain is responsible for:

The school chaplain supports staff and pupils through providing resources for daily acts of collective worship that encourages pupils to express what they believe about God in an atmosphere that is free from criticism. Collective worship will always integrate the following key elements of the RSE curriculum;

- Knowing our sacred dignity and value as human persons in the eyes of God
- Positive Mental Health and Body Image
- Respect for LGBTQ+ people
- Catholic Social Teaching
- Relationships and Bullying
- Online safety and prudent use of social media

- Rights and responsibilities as a Christian Through the work of all staff in form time, assemblies and lessons pupils are encouraged to show love and care for themselves and others.

This work alongside teaching through the curriculum allows pupils to explain the choices that they make with reference to conscience and a moral framework. The school chaplain will work alongside the RSE Lead in formulating the Catholic aspects of the policy within the Sacred Heart context, and is prepared to deliver aspects of the course to single-sex and mixed-sex audiences where appropriate

The DSL will be responsible for:

- Offering advice and consultation for safeguarding-related subjects in the RSHE curriculum.
- Promoting knowledge and awareness of safeguarding issues amongst staff.
- Being an appropriate point of contact for staff who have concerns about the welfare of a pupil that have arisen through the teaching of RSHE.

Subject teachers will be responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with, and promoting, this policy.
- Delivering RSHE in a manner that is sensitive, of high quality and appropriate for each year group.
- Ensuring they do not express personal views or beliefs when delivering the curriculum.
- Planning lessons effectively, ensuring a range of appropriate teaching methods and resources are used to cover the content.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE.
- Liaising with the SENCO to identify and respond to individual needs of pupils with SEND. Liaising with the RSHE subject leader on key topics, resources and support for individual pupils.
- Monitoring pupil progress in RSHE.
- Reporting any concerns regarding the teaching of RSE or health education to the RSHE subject leader or a member of the SLT.
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that pupils may make as a result of the subject content to the DSL.
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents have requested to withdraw them from the withdrawable sex-education components of RSE, by providing them with alternative education opportunities.

The SENCO will be responsible for:

- Advising teaching staff how best to identify and support pupils' individual needs.
- Advising staff on the use of TAs in order to meet pupils' individual needs.

3. Organisation of the RSHE curriculum

The RSHE curriculum has been developed, and will be monitored and reviewed, in consultation with teachers, pupils and parents, and in accordance with DfE recommendations.

We will gather the views of teachers, pupils, and parents in the following ways:

- Questionnaires
- Meetings
- Letters
- Training sessions

The majority of the RSHE curriculum is delivered through PSHE education, with statutory elements taught via the science curriculum. The RSHE subject leader will work closely with their colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure the curriculum complements and does not duplicate the content covered in national curriculum subjects.

The school will ensure that the curriculum remains in line with the DfE's 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' guidance at all times.

The school will consider the context and views of the wider local community when developing the curriculum to ensure it is reflective of circumstances in the local area. The religious background of all pupils will also be considered when planning teaching, to ensure all topics included are appropriately handled. The RSHE curriculum will be informed by topical issues in the school and wider community, to ensure it is tailored to pupils' needs.

4. Objectives

To develop the following attitudes and virtues:

- reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility;
- respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others;
- joy in the goodness of the created world and their own bodily natures;
- responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others;
- recognising and valuing their own sexual identity and that of others;
- celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love;
- recognising the importance of marriage and family life;
- fidelity in relationships.

To develop the following personal and social skills:

- making sound judgements and good choices which have integrity, and which are respectful of the individual's commitments;
- loving and being loved, and the ability to form friendships and loving, stable relationships free from exploitation, abuse and bullying;
- managing emotions within relationships, and when relationships break down, with confidence, sensitivity and dignity;
- managing conflict positively, recognising the value of difference;
- cultivating humility, mercy and compassion, learning to forgive and be forgiven;
- developing self-esteem and confidence, demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others;
- building resilience and the ability to resist unwanted pressures, recognising the influence and impact of the media, internet and peer groups and so developing the ability to assess pressures and respond appropriately;
- being patient, delaying gratification and learning to recognise the appropriate stages in the development of relationships, and how to love chastely;
- 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.

5. Statutory content and curriculum assurance

The RSHE lead will maintain a sequenced Years 7–11 curriculum map showing where all secondary RSE and health content in the guidance effective from September 2026 is taught, revisited and assessed. The curriculum will build on primary learning, respond to age, development and local safeguarding need, and distinguish Catholic belief from scientific facts and the law. Faith character does not remove statutory content.

RSE covers families and stable relationships, including marriage and civil partnership; respectful relationships and boundaries; equality and bullying; online relationships and media; safety, consent, coercion, exploitation and abuse; and intimate relationships and sexual health. Health education covers mental wellbeing, online safety, physical health, nutrition, drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping, health protection, first aid, puberty and changing bodies.

Planned teaching will address emerging and strengthened content including misogyny, harmful online influences, pornography, intimate-image abuse, AI deepfakes, sextortion, stalking, sexual harassment, the dangers of strangulation, gambling and safe help-seeking. Sensitive content, including self-harm and suicide prevention, must be taught safely without methods or sensational material. Pupils must not be required to disclose personal experiences.

Teach accurate facts and law on biological sex and gender reassignment, with respect for all protected groups and without endorsing contested claims as fact or reinforcing stereotypes. Include stable same-sex relationships within the wider programme and teach relevant sexual-health information to all pupils. The lead will check the complete statutory content tables rather than treat this summary as an exhaustive list.

6. Delivery of the curriculum

Through effective organisation and delivery of the RSHE, the school will ensure that:

- Core knowledge is sectioned into units of a manageable size.
- The required content is communicated to pupils clearly, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned scheme of work.
- Teaching includes sufficient and well-chosen opportunities and contexts for pupils to embed new knowledge so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations.

RSHE complements several other curriculum subjects. Where appropriate, the school will look for opportunities to make links between the subjects and integrate teaching.

The RSHE curriculum will be delivered by appropriately trained members of staff.

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing an 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. 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.

7. Curriculum links

The school will seek opportunities to draw links between RSHE and other curriculum subjects wherever possible to enhance pupils' learning. RSHE will be linked to the following subjects:

- RE – pupils are taught about God's love and Catholic teaching of healthy relationships

- Citizenship – pupils are provided with the knowledge, skills and understanding to help prepare them to play a full and active part in society, including an understanding of how laws are made and upheld and how to make sensible decisions.
- Science – pupils are taught about the main external parts of the body and changes to the human body as it grows, including puberty.
- ICT and computing – pupils are taught about how they can keep themselves safe online and the different risks that they may face online as they get older.
- PE – pupils can develop competence to excel in a broad range of physical activities, are physically active for sustained periods of time, engage in competitive sport and lead healthy, active lives.
- PSHE – pupils learn about respect and difference, values and characteristics of individuals.

8. Working with parents

We recognise that parents (and other carers who stand in their place) are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children. Therefore, the school will support parents and carers by providing material to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help parents/carers to find out more.

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

Parents/Carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE, except elements which are required by the National Curriculum for Science. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships or Health Education.

Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the Headteacher. Whilst acknowledging a parent's right to withdraw their child from elements of sex education, we believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.

9. Working with external agencies

Working with external agencies will be used to enhance our delivery of RSHE and bring in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging pupils. External experts may be invited to assist from time-to-time with the delivery of the RSHE curriculum but will be expected to comply with the provisions of this policy.

When working with external agencies, the school will:

- Check the visitor credentials of all external agencies.
- Ensure the teaching delivered by the external experts fits with the planned curriculum and provisions of this policy.
- Discuss with the visitor the details of how they intend to deliver their sessions and ensure the content is age-appropriate and accessible for all pupils.
- Request copies of the materials and lesson plans the visitor will use, to ensure it meets the full range of pupils' needs.
- Agree with the agency on how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports must be dealt with in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The school will use visitors to enhance teaching by an appropriate member of teaching staff, not to replace teaching by those staff.

10. Equality and accessibility

The school will comply with the relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and will ensure the curriculum does not discriminate against pupils because of their:

- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Sexual orientation

The school will consider the backgrounds, gender, age range and needs of its pupils and determine whether it is necessary to put in place additional support for pupils with the above protected characteristics.

The school will design the RSHE curriculum to be inclusive of all pupils. The school will be aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to their characteristics, e.g. SEND or being LGBTQ+. Teachers will understand that they may need to liaise with the SENCO and be more explicit and adapt their planning or work to appropriately deliver the curriculum to pupils with SEND.

The school will take steps to foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and behaviour between all pupils and provide an environment which challenges perceived limits on pupils based on their gender or any other characteristic.

11. Safeguarding and confidentiality

All pupils will be taught about keeping themselves safe, including online, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

To meet DfE's best practice advice, the DSL will be involved in the formulation of safeguarding- related areas of the curriculum, as the knowledge and resources may help to address safeguarding issues more appropriately and effectively.

Confidentiality within the classroom will be an important component of RSHE, and teachers will be expected to respect the confidentiality of their pupils as far as is possible, in compliance with the school's Pupil Confidentiality Policy.

Teachers will, however, understand that some aspects of RSHE may lead to a pupil raising a safeguarding concern, e.g. disclosing that they are being abused, and that if a disclosure is made, the DSL will be alerted immediately. Pupils will be made aware of how to raise their concerns or make a report and how their report will be handled – this includes the process for when they have a concern about a peer.

12. Assessment

The school will have the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work in RSHE as for other curriculum areas. Lessons will be planned to provide suitable challenge to pupils of all abilities.

Teaching will be assessed and assessments used to identify where pupils need extra support or intervention. There are no formal examinations for RSHE; however, pupils' learning will be assessed using a variety of methods including self, peer and teacher assessment. Questionnaires, hands-up surveys etc. will also help to measure impact.

13. Staff training

Training will be provided by the RSHE subject leader to the relevant members of staff on a termly basis to ensure they are up-to-date with the RSHE curriculum. Training will also be scheduled around any updated guidance on the curriculum and any new developments, which may need to be addressed in relation to the curriculum.

14. Monitoring and review

The RSHE subject leader will be responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning for the subject in line with the requirements in the requirements of the CSI inspection. This will include a mixture of the following:

- Self-evaluations
- Lesson observations
- Topic feedback forms
- Learning walks
- Work scrutiny
- Lesson planning scrutiny This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher in conjunction with the RSHE subject leader on an annual basis.

Any changes needed to the policy, including changes to the programmes, will be implemented by the Headteacher. Any changes to the policy will be clearly communicated to all members of staff and, where necessary, parents and pupils, involved in the RSHE curriculum.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is detailed on the cover page.

15. Withdrawal from sex education

Parents may request withdrawal from some or all sex education within statutory RSE, except science content. There is no right to withdraw from relationships education, health education or science. The headteacher will discuss and document requests with parents and, where appropriate, the pupil, explaining the curriculum and implications. Requests will normally be granted; refusal at secondary level is limited to exceptional circumstances, for example specific safeguarding concerns, with reasons recorded and communicated.

From three terms before the pupil turns 16, the pupil may choose to receive sex education despite parental withdrawal; the school will make suitable arrangements and ensure pupils know this option. Purposeful alternative education will be provided during withdrawal. No pupil will be penalised or left without appropriate supervision.

16. Transparency and safe delivery

Publish this policy and consult parents when developing or reviewing it. Provide an overview of planned content and an opportunity to view teaching materials; copyright or provider contracts must not prevent parental access to curriculum resources as required by current guidance. Explain changes before sensitive teaching where appropriate and respond to concerns through the Complaints Procedure. Consultation does not create a parental veto over statutory content.

Check all external providers and resources for accuracy, suitability, accessibility, safeguarding and compliance. Staff must remain responsible for delivery and be trained to handle questions, disclosures and discussion sensitively. The DSL will advise on referral and information sharing under KCSIE 2026, Working together 2026 and the September 2026 information-sharing duty. Confidentiality must never be promised where a child may be at risk. Record concerns promptly through school safeguarding procedures and act immediately on danger.

Review sources and related guidance

RSHE statutory guidance effective 1 September 2026

Keeping children safe in education 2026

Working together to safeguard children 2026

Information sharing to safeguard children and young people September 2026

Guidance checked on 26 October 2026. Use the current version on the official source page and review this policy sooner if relevant requirements change.