

RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Name of policy	RSE Policy
Status	First Approved 2020, Reviewed 2024.
Date of next review	Autumn 2026
Lead Area	SCRCAT Trust Directors

Other related policies that support this policy:

Introduction

St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Multi Academy Trust comprises thirteen Primary schools and two secondary schools across Kingston Upon Hull, the East Riding of Yorkshire and as far as Scarborough in North Yorkshire.

Our schools primarily serve the families within the Roman Catholic Parishes in the city of Hull, East Riding and North Yorkshire. From September 2020 all Primary schools are required to deliver 'Relationships Education' and secondary schools, 'Relationships and Sex Education'.

Whilst collectively our schools educate young people from the age of three to nineteen, it is clear that Relationships / Relationships and Sex Education needs to be appropriate to our individual young people's age and stage of learning. For the purposes of this Policy, the term 'Relationships Education' will refer to work undertaken in the Primary phase (ages 3 – 11) whilst the term 'Relationships and Sex Education' will refer to work undertaken in the secondary phase (ages 11-19).

The policy is intentionally overarching, as a result of the desire to present a holistic approach for all who learn in our academies; an approach rooted in our Roman Catholic Christian ethos. As such, the Directors and staff, working in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers, set out their rationale and intentions for Relationships/Relationships and Sex Education throughout the Trust.

Consultation arrangements

St Cuthbert's Primary schools hold regular open events to discuss Relationships education with Parents and to enable them to view resources. Secondary schools have held Parental information/consultation evenings regarding Relationships and Sex education in the summer term for Parents of Year 7 for many years and will continue to do so. In a Secondary Parental voice survey (SMC, February 2020) over 95% of Parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement 'I am confident in the school's approach to Relationships and Sex Education. There were over 1000 responses to the questionnaire.

A consultation with parents/carers and staff took place in April/May 2020, resulting in further review and refinement of the policy.

In addition, a consultation for Heads of School and staff took place in February 2024, resulting a further review and refinement of policy.

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Chief Executive Officer, Trust Directors and Heads of School in conjunction with senior leaders with responsibility for Relationships/Relationships and Sex Education.

The next review date is Autumn Term 2026.

Dissemination

The policy will be shared with all Directors, and members of staff. Copies of the document and information about the content of the curriculum will be available to parents on the various Academy and Trust websites.

DEFINITIONS

RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION (Primary phase)

According to The Department for Education (DfE), the focus in primary school 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 with adults. This would include the topics of families and the people of who are for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (Secondary phase)

The DfE defines Relationships and Sex Education as “lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage and family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health”¹. It is about the development of the pupil's knowledge and understanding themselves 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. The DfE identifies three main elements: “attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding”².

1. DfE - Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers 2019
2. Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfE, 2000 ² ibid

STATUTORY CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

We are legally required to teach those aspects of Relationships/Relationships and Sex Education which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science.

However, our rationale goes much further and relates specifically to our mission as Catholic schools.

RATIONALE

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

(Jn.10.10)

In our Catholic Christian context, Relationships Education/Relationships and Sex Education is delivered in the light 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 is therefore deeply grounded in the Catholic Church's teaching about the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals. Gender and sexuality are therefore seen as God's gift, with all associated learning, 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, Relationships Education/Relationships and Sex Education will be embedded in the Personal Social and Health Education (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.

In addition, the Religious Education curriculum will have an essential part to play as Catholic teaching on issues pertinent to Relationships Education/Relationships and Sex Education will be delivered by specialist teachers in an age-appropriate manner. All Relationships Education/Relationships and Sex Education will be delivered 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.

AIM OF RELATIONSHIPS/RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION AND THE MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission as Catholic schools commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that Relationships Education/Relationships and Sex Education is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, all aspects of our curriculum are designed 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” (3) Relationships/Relationships and Sex Education programme which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

(3) Gravissimum Educationis

Objectives

To develop the following attitudes and virtues:

Age range: 3-19

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

Age range 11-19 (Secondary phase only)

- recognising and valuing their own sexual identity and that of others;
- reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility;

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.
- assessing risks and managing behaviours in order to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity.

Secondary phase only

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 that Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education 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.

EQUALITIES OBLIGATIONS

St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust's Board of Directors have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that all our schools strive to do the best for members of our community 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.

BROAD CONTENT OF RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION AND RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

Three aspects of Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education - attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills will be addressed in inter-related ways: the whole school / ethos dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education curriculum.

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- experiential
- active
- film & video
- group work
- role-play

Curriculum content in R.E., Science and other subjects will be assessed according to the assessment criteria prescribed in the exam syllabus (in KS4 and 5), and in line with our assessment policies and key performance indicators, in Early Years and Key stages One to Three

PARENTS AND CARERS

We recognise that parents (and other carers who stand in their place) are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic Trust, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children. Therefore, our schools will collaborate with parents and carers by hosting information events for Parents to learn more about the Trust's approach to Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education, to discuss the methodology and to raise any questions. Individualised support will be provided within the parameters of our Pastoral care systems where required.

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 in the first instance.

We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.

BALANCED CURRICULUM

Whilst promoting Catholic moral values and virtues in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing a Relationships Education/Relationships and Sex Education programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. At secondary level, pupils will also receive clear scientific information, as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining 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 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.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHING THE PROGRAMME

Responsibility for the specific Relationships and Sex Education programme lies primarily with Class teachers in our Primary schools and with teachers of Religious Education, Science, Physical Education and PSHE in the Secondaries.

However, **all staff** will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education programme. They will be role models for pupils of good, healthy, wholesome relationships, including between staff, other adults and pupils. They will also be contributing to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.

External Visitors

In some circumstances we may call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of Relationships Education/Relationships and Sex Education. 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. 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. We will ensure that all input follows norms and principles of Catholic moral teaching and practice. (see CES guidance checklist for External Speakers to Schools)

OTHER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING RELATIONSHIP/RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

Directors

Develop and publish the Relationships Education/Relationships and Sex Education policy, in consultation with teachers and parents

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 Director to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used;

Ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education within RE and PSHE.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Executive Officer, Trust Directors and Heads of School will have the responsibility to oversee the consistent application of this Policy throughout all Trust schools and for liaison with the Directors, the Diocesan Schools' Service and the Local Education Authority, alongside other appropriate agencies.

In individual schools the Heads of School take overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for making strategic arrangements regarding communications with parents and for ongoing monitoring and evaluation

The senior staff members with respective responsibility for Personal Social and Health Education and Relationships and Sex Education

These colleagues, alongside the Head of School, in the secondary phase have a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to this aspect of the curriculum and the provision of in-service training.

All Staff

Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education is a whole school issue. All staff have a duty of care to our young people and to each other. In addition to fostering academic progress they should actively contribute to the guardianship and guidance of the physical, moral and

spiritual well-being of pupils. Teachers will be expected to teach Relationships Education/Relationships and Sex Education in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff. 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

This Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education policy is to be delivered through a cross-curricular approach. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents, in relation to Safeguarding, Bullying, Inclusion, Pastoral Care and Behaviour and discipline, in addition to the curriculum, especially, but not exclusively in RE and Science.

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

Directors seek to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which Relationships Education/Relationships and Sex Education 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.

Controversial or Sensitive issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education. 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. Directors believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of this curriculum programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to 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 question hints 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 Relationships Education/Relationships and Sex Education takes place. Effective delivery 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 that 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 Directors, all teachers, all support staff, all parents and all pupils must be made aware of this policy, particularly as it relates to issues of advice and confidentiality.

All lessons will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships, 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 individual or personal difficulties, in line with the school's approach to pastoral care. 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, Safeguarding lead etc., but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The senior members of staff with responsibility for Relationships Education/ Relationships and Sex Education 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 these groups of interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Directors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Directors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.