

St Teresa’s Senior School
Relationships and Sex Education Policy (RSE)

Policy Area:	Academic
Relevant Statutory Regulations:	ISSR Part 1 ISSR Part 2 Equality Act 2010 DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education 2021 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 Human Rights Act 1998 Working together to safeguard children 2023
Key Contact Personnel in School	
Nominated Member of Leadership Staff Responsible for the policy:	Deputy Head Pastoral
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Date of next review:	01 January 2025

Mission Statement

St Teresa’s offers a strong, caring community based on its Catholic traditions, and remains an inclusive environment that welcomes pupils from all backgrounds, faiths and none. This policy supports our school will aim “to promote high standards of personal behaviour and the development of moral and spiritual values” as well as our school values of Faith, Character, Community, Compassion and Intellect.

Aims of this Policy

In this policy, the Governors and teachers, in partnership with parents, set out their intentions about relationships and sex education (RSE) in this school.

Consultation has taken place with parents through an online parent survey. A review of the curriculum content has taken place with governors and staff (including the school nurse and Chaplain).

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headmistress, RSE Coordinator, Governing

Body and staff.

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

Defining Relationships and Sex Education

The DfE guidance states that, “children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way”.

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Our RSE program is designed to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationship. 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 also covers contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure).

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents/carers, pupils and staff, and taking into account the age, developmental stage, needs and feelings of our pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so that pupils are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

Statutory Curriculum Requirements

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science.

The School must provide RSE to all pupils under section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. In teaching RSE, we're required by our funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state, as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (para 131, 132)
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010).

This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

Rationale

The unique dignity of the human person underpins our approach to all relationship and sex education at St Teresa's. Young people are continually exposed to overt and covert sexual images and messages through the media (television, films, magazines etc.) and many of the messages they receive are either incorrect or misunderstood and ignorance can often be difficult to admit. Their frequent use of the internet also increases the risk of them accessing adult material. There are also the new risks involved with sexting (i.e. sending inappropriate images by text) and relationships through social media.

Relationships and Sex Education in a school context is a positive opportunity to help young people deal with growing and maturing into adulthood. It provides a chance to address the needs of young women within a safe, nurturing and informed environment. In a world that may present different pressures and values, it aims to help the girls to make their own informed judgements without prejudice.

Values and Virtues

Information about sex and sexuality must be given in the context and value of human relationships (including family, parenthood, and friendship). The following virtues will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion. The girls' own family and cultural background will itself offer a diversity in values and attitudes. The school provides a safe, well ordered and structured learning environment to address the moral and ethical dilemmas that they may face as an adult.

Aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at St Teresa's

Our school values and Mission Statement commit us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, our school aims state that we will endeavour to raise pupils' self-esteem, help them to grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of all persons and develop caring and sensitive attitudes. It is in this context that we commit ourselves:

In partnership with parents, to provide children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education" which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

Research has shown that effective RSE (both in school and at home) leads to more responsible behaviour, and a reduced likelihood of early sexual activity and risk of psychological and physical harm. This allows the ability to form lasting and nurturing relationships in adult life.

Our RSE teaching and learning methodologies aim to develop the self-esteem and empowerment that is an integral part of the school ethos and will be vital to their decision-making capacity as an adult.

Objectives

- To relate Christian values and ideals to the girls.
- To facilitate a whole school approach to Relationships and Sex Education
- To impart necessary factual information.
- To develop the girls' problem-solving and decision-making skills.
- To provide opportunities to clarify values and attitudes that surround personal relationships and family life.
- To prepare the girls for happy, healthy and fulfilling relationships as they move into adult life.

More specifically the programme intends to:-

- Build upon the girls' Christian values and encourage a respect for the diversity of cultures and religions that surround them.
- Promote responsible behaviour.
- Promote positive self-image and esteem, assertive behaviour and the respect of others.
- Create a positive and secure environment for open discussion and constructive critical thinking.
- Offer opportunities to share and explore feelings, values and attitudes.
- Develop skills for future carers and parents.

Inclusion and Differentiated Learning

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, faith or culture, and is taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination. Lessons will also help the girls to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber-bullying), use of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help. (In looking at these questions, it is important to draw links to the school's inclusion policy). Girls who join the school from overseas not at the beginning of Year 7 will be given an outline of the RSE they have missed so that they are clear about the expectations and British Values with regard to RSE.

During lessons, makes pupils feel:

- Safe and supported
- Able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

Make sure that pupils learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for

them, for example in:

- A whole-class setting
- Small groups or targeted sessions
- 1-to-1 discussions
- Digital formats

Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

Equalities Obligations

The governing body have wider responsibilities by law under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked-after children.

Delivery of RSE

We intend that the three aspects of the school's RSE – attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills - will be delivered in three inter-related ways:

- the whole school/ethos dimension
- a cross curricular dimension
- a specific relationships and sex curriculum within the PSHE curriculum

Teaching strategies will include:

- Establishing ground rules, distancing techniques, discussion, debate, reflection, brainstorming, film and video, group work, role-play, trigger pictures, external speakers.

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE).

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendix I.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by

grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents/carers, amongst other structures), along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, looked-after children or young carers).

We will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal political activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, hate crime, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs.

Resources

We have written our own schemes of work which incorporates aspects of several other programs of study including Ten Ten's programme 'Life to the Full' which is recommended and approved by the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton as well as the national Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

We **will** consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our pupils
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to pupils' experiences and won't provoke distress

We will make sure that an agency, external speakers and any materials used are appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

The school remains responsible for what is said to pupils. This includes making sure that any speakers, tools and resources used don't undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We **will**:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use:
 - Are age-appropriate

- Are in line with pupils' developmental stage
- Comply with:
 - This policy
 - The Teachers' Standards
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - The Human Rights Act 1998
 - The Education Act 1996
- Only work with external agencies where we have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses
- Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum
- Review any case study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with
- Be clear on:
 - What they're going to say
 - Their position on the issues to be discussed
 - Ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use
 - Know the named individuals who will be there, and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for these people
 - Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to us, or to parents and carers
 - Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session
 - Remind teachers that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session
 - Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers
 - Share all external materials with parents and carers

We **won't**, under any circumstances:

- Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions
- Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme

Assessment and Recording

A record of each session is kept in each teacher's planning for the delivery of RSE. The programme will be assessed, monitored and evaluated by the RSE Coordinator in accordance with the school's monitoring and evaluation policy. Pupils are given the opportunity for self- evaluation at an age appropriate level.

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 in educating their children. A summary of what is to be covered by each year group (appendix 1) is always available along with this policy on the school website. At the beginning of the academic year parents will be sent a copy and invited to make comments or ask questions. Any concerns can be made by contacting the RSE coordinator. They are invited to ask to view the resources used by the school in the RSE programme. Our aim is that every parent will have full confidence in the school's RSE programme to meet their child's needs. At the beginning of the Year 7 RSE carousel of lessons in PSHE, all parents are written to by the RSE coordinator, the Head of PSHE and the school nurse to explain the carousel and provide details of what is to be taught in RSE throughout the year.

Parents continue to 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 Headmistress. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning. We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed. Please refer to the DfE guidance Page 17 for further details on the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw). This withdrawal can take place until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Parents will receive feedback on their daughter's progress in RSE in the Summer term reports. In Years 7 and 9 this will be within their science reports, in other years it will be in the form teacher report.

Balanced Curriculum

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. Pupils will also receive clear scientific information. 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 teaching of relationships and sex education programme lies with the PSHE, science and RE teachers, external speakers, the school nurses and the school chaplain.

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

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

The governing board will approve the RSE policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

They will:

- ensure that the policy is available to parents;
- ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g., SEN, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs;
- ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children;
- establish a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used;
- ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHE.

Head teacher

The Head teacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, the Diocesan Schools' Service and the Local Education Authority as well as any other appropriate agencies.

RSE Co-Ordinator

The co-ordinator, with the Headmistress, has 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 RSE and the provision of in-service training. (If they are not a member of the safeguarding team, they will be supported by member of staff with responsibility for safeguarding).

All Staff

RSE is a whole school issue. All teachers have a responsibility of care; as well as fostering academic progress they should actively contribute to the guardianship and guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of their pupils. Teachers will be expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSE. All staff have been included in the development of this policy and all staff should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them.

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE

- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the [non-statutory/non-science] components of RSE
- Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

Relationship to Other Policies and Curriculum Subjects

This RSE policy includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents (for example, PSHE, Anti-Bullying, Safeguarding etc).

Pupils with particular difficulties, whether of a physical or intellectual nature, will receive appropriately differentiated support in order to enable them to achieve mature knowledge, understanding and skills. Teaching methods will be adapted to meet the varying needs of this group of pupils.

Learning about RSE in PSHE classes will link to/complement learning in those areas identified in the RSE audit.

Dealing with sensitive Issues and responding to questions

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. They want to ensure that pupils can ask questions freely, be confident that their questions will be answered, and be sure that they will be free from bullying or harassment from other children and young people.

All RSE teaching will be undertaken in a whole class or year context.

Teachers will use their professional judgement when addressing sensitive issues and will answer questions honestly but with due regard given to the nature of the question and the age and maturity of the questioner. Careful consideration will be given to the wide and varied experience and backgrounds of the pupils in their care.

In some cases it may be inappropriate for the teacher to respond to a specific question and the pupil will be referred to her parents if necessary.

Teachers should never feel pressured into discussing their personal views or experiences and should always respect the sensitivity of their position as a teacher in a Catholic school.

Safeguarding

Children will need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place. Effective RSE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships.

Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue. Teachers will need to be aware of the needs of their pupils and not let any fears and worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects 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.

The school recognises that young people are exposed to sexual harassment and online sexual abuse. Therefore, the schools' approach is to address these issues within the RSE schemes and through assemblies, Form times and conversations. Those pupils who are known to have been the subject of unhealthy relationships or sexual abuse of any kind will be given the opportunity to learn the compulsory material in a safe environment in which they feel comfortable.

Confidentiality and Advice

All governors, 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, especially those in the RSE programme, will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and sex, developing appropriate personal and social skills and becoming appreciative of the values and attitudes which underpin the Christian understanding of what it means to be fully human.

Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents about the issues which are discussed in the programme. Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties, in line with the school's pastoral care policy. Teachers should explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance. Teachers will explain that in such circumstances they would have to inform others, e.g., DSL, parents, Headmistress, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken

Monitoring and Evaluation

The RSE Co-ordinator will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils work at regular intervals. The programme will be evaluated annually. Governors will consider all such evaluations and any suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy and will review it annually at the Pastoral and Safeguarding committee.

Dissemination

Copies of this policy will be available to all parents through the school's website and copies can also be obtained through the School Office. Details of the content of the RSE curriculum will also be published on the school's website.

*Reviewed: MAG, VLO, SPC, PCA 21 January 2021 Accepted: Pastoral Committee meeting 26 January 2021 Accepted and Endorsed: Full Governors 09 March 2021
Reviewed: PCA, VLO Jan 2022 Reviewed PCA, VLO May 2022
Updated PCA VLO January 2023,
Updated RWH January 2024
Next Review Date: January 2025*

Appendix I

Summary of Relationships and Sex Education in the curriculum at St Teresa's

Our aim is to provide every girl in the school with the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that are necessary to live well in relationships with others, themselves, and the community. At the core of our provision are our five school values: Character, Intellect, Faith, Community and Compassion.

Our teaching of RSE is

- **Progressive & Developmental:** The learning is appropriate to the age and stage of development of the pupils during the different phases of their education.
- **Differentiated:** RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils and is taught in a way that allows access to those pupils at different stages of cognitive and emotional development.
- **Cross-curricular:** The teaching is reflected in many parts of the curriculum, primarily PSHE, RS and Science, as well as Chapel and other relevant curriculum subjects.

We ensure that all pupils are offered a broad and balanced RSE programme, which provides them with clear, factual, scientific information when relevant and meets the statutory requirements placed on schools. This includes teaching pupils about the laws relating to forced marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion and equalities legislation (including the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013).

At every stage in the PSHE curriculum we look at the effects and impacts that social media has on all relationships and follow this up with parent seminars. The Teen Tips Wellbeing Hub which all pupils, staff and parents are members of also provides seminars and podcasts throughout the year.

Year	Subject Area	Topic
7	PSHE (taught as a carousel)	Safeguarding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Getting to know each other• Friendship & jealousy• Diversity• Your identity and Image• Bullying and what to do about it• Right and Wrong• Discrimination

		<p>Ethical issues relating to sexual relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Safety • Puberty • Reproductive organs & functions (internal and external) • Gametes and fertilisation • Pregnancy and birth • Personal hygiene • Sun safe • First aid • Money management • Online safety – peer pressure online and staying safe
8	PSHE	<p>All about me and Self Esteem</p> <p>Smoking and vaping Safeguarding</p> <p>Personal Hygiene</p> <p>Fair trade and child labour</p> <p>Online safety – Sending inappropriate images</p> <p>Race and Racism</p> <p>Healthy Relationships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to behave appropriately • Our responsibility and childrens’ rights • Getting on with others incl. Parents • Consent • Being safe online • Looking after your and other’s mental health • Peer pressure • First Aid • Fake news • Disabilities • Healthy Eating • Healthy and unhealthy relationships
	RE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sacrament of Marriage
9	PSHE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding • Sleep • LGBTQ+ in the media • Body image & self esteem • Online safety – Sending inappropriate images • The significance of the media • Peer Pressure • Consent

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Relationships (including LGBTQ+ and same sex relationships) and unhealthy relationships • Child sexual abuse and exploitation • FGM • Sexually transmitted diseases • Contraception • Managing normal mental health issues • Discrimination and race • Piercing and tattoos • Loss and bereavement • Eating disorders and body dysmorphia
	RS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian ethics – Christian love, forgiveness and social ethics • The sanctity of life – including reverence for life, biotechnology, medical ethics, beginning of human life, fertilization and embryology, euthanasia, abortion and sexism
	Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure of the reproductive system • Puberty, the Menstrual Cycle and gametes • Fertilisation, gestation and birth • Factors affecting fertility • Menopause • Contraception • STIs
10	PSHE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding • The Party Scene • Sexual Exploitation • Alcohol and drugs • Healthy and unhealthy relationships • Mental health and anxiety • Unhealthy relationships as a form of self-harm • Discrimination and race • Human rights • Loss and bereavement • LGBTQ+ in the media • Sexual harassment and sexual abuse, gangs and CSE
	RE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God's love and Jesus
	Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STDs
11	PSHE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Party Scene • LGBTQ+ in the media • Women's health • Race and racism • Diversity and inclusion • Forgiveness • Mental health beyond school
	RS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion, relationships and families (including human beings as sexual, male and female, sexuality and its expression, valid marriage, annulment, divorce and remarriage, family planning and contraception, the nature and purpose of family, gender equality, prejudice and discrimination)
	Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hormones in reproduction • Contraception • Infertility
12 & 13	PSHE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding • Personal safety & rape awareness • Drug awareness • Consent & domestic abuse • Sexual Harassment in the workplace • Safe drive Stay Alive • How to debate
	Enrichment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RE and ethical debates • Learn a new skill – ukulele and song writing • Personal wellbeing • Yoga • Charitable work and volunteering