

September 2026

Relationships and Health Education Policy

In Consultation

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St. Ethelbert's Catholic
Primary School

Relationships and Health Education Policy

School Mission

St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School and Nursery is a faith community built upon the Gospel values of love, compassion, mercy and trust. We follow the teaching of the Catholic Church, through celebration of the Liturgy and in following the values taught in the Gospel of Jesus and our school's Mission Statement:

'Learning, achieving and growing together with Jesus'

This Policy has been developed in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This convention establishes and builds shared values for Rights and how we respect the rights of others throughout the whole school. The UNCRC initiative firmly underpins the Vision and Mission statements, from which a culture and ethos is generated that supports the spiritual development of all involved in the community. Article 13 of the UNCRC states that all children have the right to get and share information as long as it does not harm them.

As a school we aim to:

- Recognise the unique gifts and talents that each of our pupils has been given by God, developing these to ensure that each individual reaches the very best of their potential
- Build on the links between school, church and parish, so that each pupil's faith journey is nurtured and developed as they move through the school
- Support each pupil to understand their responsibilities to others as members of a faith community, and, as a global citizen, to the world that God has created

Vision for Relationships and Health Education

At St. Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School, we are inspired by Jesus to be the very best we can be. We look after one another and show respect and love through our relationships with one another. This is about understanding how loving our neighbour enables us to be fulfilled too. Therefore, having a good relationship with ourselves and the other people in our lives makes us grow and flourish and we respect that everyone is a unique and important part of God's creation. We are all children of God, called to grow in love for Him through the person of Jesus Christ and to spread the Good News through our thoughts, actions and words.

As Catholic educators we have a duty to prepare our pupils for the demands of modern life, and to ensure they have the appropriate knowledge and emotional skills to navigate the challenges that they will face as they grow and move from primary education into the next phase. Our moral duty is to develop and grow purposeful, confident, socially responsible young people who will become the adult role models of the future.

Our RHE Policy

The following groups have been consulted as part of producing this policy: -

- Pupils
- Staff
- Local Academy Committee (LAC)
- Parents
- Diocesan Education Service
- Academy trustees, where appropriate

Implementation of this policy will take place after consultation with the above groups in the Advent term 2026. The changes made to the policy are highlighted in light blue.

It will be reviewed every two years by the Head teacher, RHE Leader, the Academy Committee and staff. The next review date is Advent 2028.

The policy will be circulated to all members of the Academy Committee and all members of staff. A full copy of the policy is available on the school website, and paper copies can be provided to parents on request.

Details of the content of our RHE curriculum are available through the parent portal on the Ten Ten website.

Rationale and Definition of RHE

‘I have come that you might have life and have it to the full’ (Jn.10.10)

At St Ethelbert's we use the term 'Relationship and Health Education' as we believe growing a happy and fulfilled life is our aim for our pupils. The defining belief of Christianity is that we are formed in the image of God, and that we have been endowed with an extraordinary human dignity and unique characteristics that make us all special and worthy of all the gifts that life can provide. To this end, our pupils need to understand their own human worth, and that of others. In line with the teachings of the Church on relationships, family life, marriage and sex, we promote an ethos of love, care and acceptance of others.

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. RHE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationship as it is there that sexuality grows and develops.

Catholic education teaches children about the dignity of human life, the importance of caring for others and for respecting oneself. In the 21st Century, keeping safe is a key priority for children, in relationships with friends and family, and online. Themes such as stages in the human life cycle, body changes, managing emotions, making choices, respecting others, recognising risky behaviours and accepting oneself are ways in which pupils are taught how to be physically and emotionally healthy at an age-appropriate level, and with the Gospel values firmly underpinning the teaching.

As children mature, we encourage them to follow the example of Jesus and live lives inspired by the Gospel virtues, enabling them to follow His commandment to “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Mark 12:31). This is the basis for all relationships in our school.

The DfE guidance states that “children and young people need knowledge and skills that will enable them to make informed and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships”. High-quality RHE does this by promoting their “moral, social, mental and physical development” and cultivating “positive characteristics including resilience, self-worth, self-respect, honesty, integrity, courage, kindness, and trustworthiness” (RSE and Health Education: Statutory Guidance for governing bodies, headteachers... and teachers, July 2025, p.2).

It is about the development of the pupil’s knowledge and understanding of her or him 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. In primary schools the focus should be on “teaching the skills and knowledge that form the building blocks of all positive relationships, supporting children from the start of their education to grow into kind, caring adults who have respect for others and know how to keep themselves and others safe.” (RSE and Health education, 2025, p.7).

This would include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe. By supporting confidence and self-esteem, RHE will enable young people to make their own choices about whether and when to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, once they reach the age of consent, and to resist pressure to have sex.” (RSE and Health education, 2025, p.11)

Objectives

To develop the following attitudes and virtues:

- reverence for the gift of human sexual 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.
- how to keep themselves safe by 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.

Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales and as advocated by the DfE, RHE will be firmly 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. 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. All RHE 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. It will also prepare pupils for life in a modern, diverse and inclusive Britain.

RHE will be taught in accordance with the principles set down in other relevant school's policies such as Equalities Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Special Educational Needs. The school uses the Ten Ten resource 'Life to the Full' to deliver the RHE curriculum content within the context of a Christian understanding of human sexuality rooted in the wisdom and teaching of the Catholic Church.

Inclusion

St Ethelbert's ensure that the teaching of RHE is sensitive to the different needs and personal circumstances of individual pupils; for example, their own faith or culture and is taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination but allows access to those pupils at different stages of cognitive and emotional development. Learning and teaching methods may need to be adapted, and specialist resources and training may need to be provided for those with particular needs.

Equalities obligations

The Local Academy Committee have wider responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of age, disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, pregnancy, maternity, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation, whether they are children looked-after or any other protected characteristics.

Broad of Content of RHE

Cross-curricular

Since, as a Catholic school, we are committed to the education of the whole person, teaching on relationships and sexuality will be reflected in each relevant part of the curriculum. Whilst, for example, some aspects of RHE will be more appropriately explored in science lessons and some more appropriately explored in RE lessons, each will be informed by the other. Each discipline will speak with consistency about the meaning of human love and the virtues that are enshrined in the Church's teaching on human love.

'Life to the Full' is a fully resourced Scheme of Work in Relationships Education for Catholic primary schools which embraces and fulfils the new statutory curriculum taught with a spiral approach to learning, in which pupils will revisit the same topics at an age-appropriate age throughout their school life. The programme includes teaching about personal health, physical and emotional wellbeing, strong emotions, private parts of the body that include the scientific names for these body parts, personal relationships, family structures, trusted adults, growing bodies, puberty, periods, life cycles, the dangers of social media, where babies come from, an understanding of the Common Good and living in the wider world. The entire teaching is underpinned with a religious understanding that our deepest identity is as a child of God – created, chosen and loved by God. The programme is fully inclusive of all pupils and their families. Our 'Life to the Full' programme will cover:

Module 1: Created and Loved by God

- Religious Understanding
- Me, My Body, My Health
- Emotional Well-Being
- Life Cycles

Module 2: Created to Love Others

- Religious Understanding
- Personal Relationship
- Keeping Safe

Module 3: Created to Live in Community

- Religious Understanding
- Living in the Wider World

The content of each module for each Key Stage can be found on the Parent Portal through the TenTen website (link on our school website.). For the purposes of this RHE programme the Key Stages are:

EYFS- Nursery and Reception

Key Stage 1 – Year 1 and Year 2

Lower Key Stage 2 – Year 3 and Year 4

Upper Key Stage 2 – Year 5 and Year 6

Assessment

Each unit of work has an assessment activity associated with it which will enable us to track progress of learning across each unit. The assessment activities consider the learning objectives of each unit. They are carried out at the beginning and end of each session to show the impact of the teaching and learning.

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 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 an online Parent Portal where they will have access to all the online media sessions. Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RHE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning. In the case where any concerns or questions arise, these can be discussed with the class teacher.

Sex Education

At St. Ethelbert's sex education is taught using the Ten Ten 'Life to the Full' resource to support pupils' learning and understanding within a Catholic context. Sex education is taught in Year 6, and the resources are available for parents to view prior to the lessons being delivered. Parents/carers continue to have the right to withdraw their children from Sex Education except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science order. Any parents who wish to do so should make an appointment to discuss this with the headteacher. We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed. Please refer to the DfE's RSE and Health Education guidance, July 2025 p.6 for further details on the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw).

Responsibility for teaching the Programme

Responsibility for the specific relationships and health education programme resides with all teaching staff. All staff 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.

External Visitors

Our school will often call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RHE. 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. Any visitor must adhere to our code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Checklist for External Speakers to Schools.

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 will ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice.

Other Roles and Responsibilities regarding RHE

Governors

- draw up the RHE policy, in consultation with parents and teachers;
- 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 the policy meets statutory requirements;
- 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 RHE within PSHE.

Head teacher

The Head teacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Local Academy Committee, parents, the Diocesan Schools' Service, Academy Trustees (where appropriate) and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

PSHE/RHE Co-Ordinator

The co-ordinator with the head teacher 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 RHE and the provision of in-service training. *(They may be supported by the curriculum lead and the member of staff with responsibility for child protection).*

All Staff

RHE 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 RHE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RHE. 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.

Difficult Questions

All RHE content will be taught sensitively with the use of age-appropriate resources. Children are naturally curious and may have questions that are difficult to answer in a whole-class setting. Teachers will avoid giving their own opinions or judgements and will answer questions about the statutory content of the RHE curriculum in a factual way. It may not be appropriate to answer all questions, and parents will be kept informed if their child has asked a question that may require further discussion. The aim is that children are given correct information, and not dissuaded from asking questions, rather than looking to the internet or other unregulated sources of information for answers.

Teachers will be expected to teach RHE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RHE. 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. (See also Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers, July 2025, p.40 for more detail).

Supporting Children who are at Risk

Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RHE takes place. The governors believe that children are best educated and protected from harm by discussing issues openly within the context of the RHE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion.

Effective RHE 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 is a victim of or is at risk of harm or 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 governors, all teachers, all support staff, all parents/carers 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 RHE programme, will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and health, 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 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/carers, Headteacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The programme will be evaluated by means of examining samples of pupils' work, questionnaires/ assessments given to pupils, and / or by discussion with pupils, staff and parents/carers. This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or before if appropriate.



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