



**St Ralph
Sherwin**
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Version 3
March 2026



One of three Catholic
Multi Academy Trusts in
the Diocese of Nottingham



Document Provenance

Title of policy:	Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)	
Author and policy owner in the Central Leadership Team:	Amanda Greaves	
Version number:	3	
Date approved:	May 2026	
Approved by:	Curriculum and Standards Committee	
Date of next review:	April 2028	
Document review and editorial updates:		
Version control	Date	Key revisions included
Version 1		Initial creation
Version 2	March 2024	Review cycle updates
Version 3	March 2026	Updates from KCSiE, RSHE 2025-2026 and CES guidance added



Saint Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust Vision

Academies within The Saint Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust ensure that each child is treated individually and with respect. We lead by the example of our namesake, Saint Ralph Sherwin, a martyr who risked all for his faith, seeking to do the Lord's will "today rather than tomorrow". All academies within the Saint Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust share the same collective vision:

Vision

We are a Catholic family of schools, working as one. We aim to ensure:

- The best possible education for every child.
- To provide Catholic formation which inspires all of us to live a life of service modelled on the Gospels.
- To continue to build sustainable and caring communities in which the most vulnerable can flourish.
- To recognise that every member of our community has a vital role to play.

Our Mission

'Growing in faith, serving with love, transforming our world; together in Christ'.

Our Core Virtues

All schools within the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust, and members of our Central Team are guided by three core virtues which underpin everything that we do:

- Trust
- Togetherness
- Kindness

Please follow the link below for further information regarding the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust.

[Our Mission, Vision and Virtues - St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust](#)



1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 The DfE states that children “need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives positively” (DfE). RSE supports pupils to understand themselves as relational beings, called to live in right relationship with God, self and others.

1.2 In primary schools the focus 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.”² This would include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

1.3 In Secondary schools RSE should “give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure).”

1.4 In this policy directors, governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions about relationships and sex education (RSE) within the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church. It sets out the rationale for, and approach to, relationships and sex education in schools.

1.5 The policy has been informed by consultation undertaken with parents and carers and pupils. Consultation was undertaken via an electronic survey form linked to the Ten Ten (our RSE scheme of work) key decisions and consultation suite of information via the Ten Ten website.

1.6 Updated statutory RSHE guidance (published July 2025, becoming compulsory September 2026) introduces strengthened requirements regarding misogyny, online harms, deepfakes, safety in public spaces and mental-health awareness.

This policy reflects these updated expectations within a Catholic framework.



2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to all staff in every school and should be adopted as a whole school approach to RSE. It is consistent with statutory and legal requirements and is significant to ensure that all pupils grow up to be healthy, happy and safe and know how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.

2.2 This policy aligns with statutory safeguarding requirements, including KCSIE 2025, which strengthens expectations around online safety, misinformation and cyber security.

3. Legislation and regulation

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

3.2 Each school complies with:

- Education Act 2002
- Statutory RSHE Guidance (2019, updated 2025–26)
- KCSIE 2025 (in force from September 2025)
- Equality Act 2010

4. Rationale

4.1 The reasons for the inclusion of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) go further than statutory requirements and include the call of Christ:

“I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL” (Jn.10:10).

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

4.3 At the heart of Christian life is the Trinity—Father, Son and Spirit in communion—united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation. Because we are



made in the image of God, gender and sexuality are understood as gifts from God, reflecting God's beauty and sharing in the divine creativity. RSE is therefore placed firmly within the context of relationship, as it is through relationships that sexuality grows and develops.

4.4 Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales and as advocated by the DfE, RSE is embedded within the PSHE framework, 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 the human person as good news and promotes a positive and prudent understanding of development, while enabling pupils to appreciate both opportunities and risks. In line with updated national guidance, this policy integrates strengthened safeguarding expectations relating to digital manipulation, artificial intelligence, online misogyny, incel culture and harmful online communities, ensuring pupils are equipped to recognise and respond safely to emerging digital risks.

4.5 All RSE will remain faithful to the Church's moral teaching. It will emphasise the centrality of marriage and family life, while recognising that all pupils have a fundamental right to have their dignity respected, whatever their household circumstances. The programme also prepares pupils to navigate modern risks prudently and safely, supporting them to grow into wise, discerning and resilient individuals capable of making moral decisions in contemporary society.

5. Values and virtues

5.1. The programme upholds core Catholic values that highlight the importance of stable relationships, marriage, and family life. It also promotes the virtues essential for responding to God's call to love others with respect for their inherent dignity and the dignity of the human body. The programme explicitly explores and nurtures the virtues of faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion, and now incorporates strengthened expectations for fostering respectful, non-violent and safe relationships in response to national safeguarding priorities.

6. Aim of RSE and the Mission Statement

6.1. Our Mission Statement commits 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, 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:



6.2 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.

7. Objectives

7.1 Attitudes and Virtues

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 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.

7.2 Personal and Social Skills

To develop the following personal and social skills:

- making sound judgements and good choices that demonstrate integrity and respect for 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 and recognising the value of difference;
- cultivating humility, mercy and compassion, learning to forgive and be forgiven;



- developing self-esteem and confidence, showing self-respect and empathy for others;
- building resilience and the ability to resist unwanted pressures, including recognising the influence of media, internet and peer groups;
- being patient, delaying gratification and learning the appropriate stages of relationship development, including loving chastely;
- assessing risks and managing behaviours to minimise harm and protect personal integrity.

Updated expectations now include the development of skills to:

- recognise and respond safely to online risks, including deepfakes, AI chatbots, financial scams and extremist online narratives;
- develop resilience against misinformation and harmful digital content;
- understand and respond safely to misogyny and harmful ideologies, including those amplified online.

7.3 Knowledge and Understanding

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 family life;
- the central role of virtue in guiding human living and loving;
- the physical and psychological changes associated with puberty;
- the facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and the sacred role of sexual love in procreation;
- how to manage fertility in a way consistent with their stage of life, values and commitments, including understanding the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception;
- how to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and avoid unintended pregnancy, and where to seek advice.

Expanded knowledge now includes:

- updated safeguarding risks linked to online technologies, including AI-generated content;
- personal safety in public spaces, rail, road and water environments;



- key aspects of mental-health literacy, including grief, bereavement and suicide awareness.

8. Inclusion and differentiated learning

8.1. 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 children to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber-bullying and sexual harassment), 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).

8.2 Teaching remains sensitive to individual needs and protected characteristics, with strengthened expectations regarding respectful understanding of diverse families including same-sex families, adoptive families and kinship carers.

9. Equalities Obligations

9.1. The local governing body has wider responsibilities 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, pregnancy, maternity, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked-after children.

9.2. The school will also strive to ensure that pupils have an age-appropriate exposure and understanding of, and respect for, the protected characteristics. These being: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. If any of these elements are not taught within the primary curriculum, school leaders should assure themselves (as a minimum) that the missing themes are covered in the curriculum of the secondary school that the majority of pupils transfer into at the end of Key Stage 2. Furthermore, in accordance with the DfE's statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex and Health Education, secondary academies are required to teach about LGBT relationships, ensuring this is integrated sensitively and in line with the RSE guidance. This provision will be inspected as part of an Ofsted Graded Inspection (usually every five years).

9.3 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.

9.4 The updated guidance strengthens expectations for Virtual School Heads (VSHs) in relation to children living in kinship care arrangements. It clarifies that VSHs must ensure these pupils receive appropriate safeguarding oversight, targeted support, and inclusion within local authority processes. This includes monitoring their welfare and educational progress, ensuring any additional vulnerabilities linked to kinship care are identified early, and coordinating with schools and safeguarding partners so that children in kinship care are not overlooked and receive equitable access to support services.

10. Broad Content of RSE

10.1. Three aspects of RSE - attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills will be provided in three inter-related ways: the whole school / ethos dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific relationships and sex curriculum. This will continue to be delivered through whole-school ethos, cross-curricular links and a discrete programme, with new digital-literacy elements integrated.

11. Parents and Carers

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

11.2. Parents must 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. They will be able to view the resources used by the school in the RSE programme. 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.



11.3. 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 headteacher. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning.

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

11.5. 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).

12. Balanced Curriculum

12.1. 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 curriculum that explores a range of viewpoints in a manner consistent with the dignity of each person and the mission of Catholic education.

12.2. Pupils will receive clear scientific and legal information as part of their entitlement to an accurate and safeguarding-aligned curriculum. This includes content relating to the law in areas such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion, the age of consent and equality legislation, while ensuring that exploring different viewpoints is not the same as promoting behaviour and remains compatible with Catholic teaching. They will also be supported to understand emerging online harms, including misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories, incel-related ideologies, digital manipulation and risks linked to artificial intelligence, reflecting strengthened national safeguarding requirements

In addition, updated statutory expectations require schools to place greater emphasis on violence against women and girls, enabling pupils to recognise harmful attitudes and behaviours, understand their responsibilities in promoting respectful relationships and contribute to a culture of safety, dignity and equality.

12.3. In line with the SRSCMAT Assessment Framework, and consistent with all other curriculum areas, leaders will identify the key knowledge that pupils are expected to learn and retain from the RSE curriculum. Both formative and, where appropriate, summative assessment will provide valid and reliable information about whether pupils are successfully learning the intended content and applying it safely and appropriately in their lives.



13. Children's questions, Controversial or Sensitive issues

13.1. The school will promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. Pupils will be encouraged to ask questions freely, confident that they will be answered appropriately, and assured that they will be free from bullying or harassment from other children and young people. In line with updated RSHE guidance, staff will ensure that the classroom remains a safe and supportive environment, using clear ground rules and agreed expectations to enable safe discussion of sensitive topics, including those arising from online experiences and disclosures.

13.2. There will always be sensitive or controversial issues within RSE. These may relate to pupils' maturity, personal experiences, disagreement with the teaching of the Church, illegal activity, or other harmful or risky behaviours. Updated national guidance recognises the need for teachers to be equipped to manage difficult questions confidently and safely, ensuring that responses remain age-appropriate, accurate, and aligned with Catholic teaching while protecting pupil wellbeing.

13.3. The Trust believes that children are best educated and protected from harm and exploitation when sensitive issues are addressed openly within the structured context of the RSE programme. The use of negotiated ground rules between teachers and pupils creates a supportive climate for discussion. In accordance with the updated RSHE expectations, teachers will also be alert to the increased likelihood that pupils may raise online-related concerns or disclosures, and must respond in a manner consistent with safeguarding procedures and the creation of a safe classroom environment.

13.4. Some questions may raise issues which are not appropriate to address during ordinary class time, such as those that hint at abuse, are deliberately tendentious, or are of an overly personal nature. In these circumstances, teachers will handle the matter sensitively and follow school safeguarding protocols, ensuring pupils are supported and protected in line with national RSHE guidance on managing difficult or potentially harmful disclosures.

14. Supporting children and young people who are at risk

14.1. Children will need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place. Effective RSE provides structured opportunities for discussion about what is and is not appropriate in relationships, and such conversations may lead to disclosures of safeguarding concerns. In line with updated guidance, safeguarding duties now also incorporate KCSIE 2025 expectations around cyber security and a heightened



responsibility for recognising pupils who may be affected by harmful online movements, digital misinformation, or exposure to extremist online content. This ensures that staff remain alert not only to interpersonal risks but also to the increasingly significant online influences that may affect a pupil's wellbeing.

14.2. Teachers must remain aware of the needs and experiences of their pupils and ensure that no fears or worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects that a child or young person is a victim of, or is at risk of, abuse—whether arising from offline interactions or online harms such as misinformation-fuelled grooming, coercion or harmful digital communities—they are required to follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

15. Confidentiality and Advice

5.1. 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.

15.2. 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.

15.3. 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 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., parents, head teacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

16. Roles and Responsibilities

16.1 Delivery of the Programme

16.1.1 Responsibility for the specific Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme lies with class teachers, who remain the *primary deliverers* of the curriculum under the leadership and guidance of the PHSE/RSE Lead. This aligns with updated expectations that delivery should be led by trained staff who understand both statutory requirements and the Catholic framework within which the programme is taught.



16.1.2 All staff contribute to the development of the attitudes and values element of the RSE programme. They serve as role models of healthy, respectful and wholesome relationships in their interactions with pupils, colleagues and other adults. Staff also support pupils' personal and social development, ensuring that teaching reflects updated statutory RSE guidance and safeguarding requirements, including the recognition of emerging online risks and pastoral considerations.

16.2 External Visitors

External visitors may be invited to enrich the programme; however, they must follow the CES (Catholic Education Service) checklist and ensure that all content remains fully consistent with Catholic teaching and updated statutory RSE and safeguarding guidance. Visitors are expected to complement—never replace—teacher-led provision and must work within the school's agreed protocols, safeguarding procedures and curriculum aims.

16.3 CMAT Trust Board

The Trust Board has overarching strategic responsibility for RSE across the organisation. This includes:

- Approving the RSE policy and ensuring its alignment with Catholic teaching, statutory RSHE guidance and safeguarding legislation.
- Ensuring the policy reflects updated RSHE requirements and safeguarding reforms, including online-safety expectations and national curriculum changes.
- Reviewing the policy at appropriate intervals or sooner if national guidance changes.

16.4 Local Governing Bodies

Local Governing Bodies oversee the implementation of the RSE policy at school level. Their responsibilities include:

- Ensuring parents/carers are consulted during policy development.
- Ensuring the policy is accessible to parents and clearly outlines the right to withdraw (where applicable).
- Monitoring the delivery of RSE to ensure it complies with statutory guidance, including updated RSHE and safeguarding reforms.
- Ensuring that RSE reflects Catholic teaching while meeting national requirements.

16.5 Headteacher

The Headteacher holds overall responsibility for ensuring:

- The RSE policy is implemented effectively within the school.
- Staff receive appropriate training, including updates relating to RSHE reforms, online-safety expectations, and safeguarding duties.
- Curriculum delivery is consistent with Catholic teaching, statutory obligations and the school's mission.
- Effective liaison with governors, the Trust, parents, diocesan advisers and external agencies.



16.6 PSHE/RSE Co-ordinator

The PSHE/RSE Co-ordinator supports staff and ensures that:

- Curriculum planning and resources reflect updated statutory guidance, including RSHE 2025–26 requirements and KCSIE 2025 safeguarding updates.
- Teachers are equipped to deliver content confidently, including sensitive issues and online-related risks.
- High-quality teaching and learning are maintained through monitoring, professional development and resource curation.
- RSE remains consistent with Catholic values and the CES model curriculum.

16.7 All Staff

All staff have a responsibility to:

- Model respectful, safe and positive relationships in accordance with the Catholic ethos.
- Support pupils' spiritual, moral, emotional and social development.
- Deliver or reinforce RSE in line with updated statutory guidance, including safeguarding reforms and recognition of online harms.
- Follow safeguarding procedures promptly, particularly where pupil disclosures relate to online risks, misinformation, or involvement in harmful digital communities.
- Promote a safe and supportive learning environment, helping pupils feel confident to ask questions and seek help.

17. Monitoring, Compliance and Review

17.1. The RSE Co-ordinator will ensure curriculum and resources meet updated statutory requirements from KCSIE 2025 and RSHE 2026. Evaluations will continue biannually. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

Policy to be reviewed in March 2028