



# St Matthew Academy

## RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

### Policy

*Our motto is 'Let your light shine'. It is taken from St Matthew's Gospel and captures our belief in the uniqueness of each individual. Our aim is to ensure that the talents and strengths of each pupil are encouraged, developed and celebrated*

**S**uccessful, confident learners

**H**igh expectations, outstanding achievements

**I**nclusive, caring, Catholic community

**N**urturing talent, cultivating ambition

**E**xcellence for all

<b>Date of Approval</b>	<b>Summer 2021</b>
<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Summer 2022</b>

## School Mission Statement

*Our motto is 'Let your light shine'. It is taken from St Matthew's Gospel and captures our belief in the "uniqueness of each individual" and our aim is to support our young people in an inclusive, caring Catholic Community.*

Successful, confident learners  
High expectations, outstanding achievements  
Inclusive, caring, Catholic community  
Nurturing talent, cultivating ambition  
Excellence for all

In this policy the Governors teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions about relationships and sex education (RSE). We set out our rationale for, approach to relationships and sex education at St Matthew Academy.

## Review of the Policy

It was produced by the Deputy Headteacher responsible for RSHE in consultation with pupils, parents, staff and the governors. The policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Headteacher, RSHE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and Staff. The next review date is May 2022.

## Dissemination

The policy will be made available to all members of the Governing Body, and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the document will be available to all parents through the schools website and a copy is available in the school office. Details of the content of the RSE curriculum will be published on the school's website.

## Defining Relationship 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"<sup>1</sup>. 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 fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults."<sup>2</sup> This would include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe. 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)."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 4

<sup>2</sup> Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 19

<sup>3</sup> Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 25

## **Statutory curriculum requirements**

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. (There is also a separate requirement for maintained secondary schools to teach about HIV, AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. This does not apply to academies). All primary schools should teach Relationship Education.

However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

## **Rationale**

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

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

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

Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales and as advocated by the DFE (and the Welsh Assembly Government) RSE 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 RSE will be in accordance with the Church's moral teaching. It will emphasise the central importance of marriage and the family whilst acknowledging that all pupils have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from. It will also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

## **Values and Virtues**

Our programme enshrines Catholic values relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life. It also promotes those virtues which are essential in responding to God's call to love others and with proper respect for their dignity and the dignity of the human body. The following virtues will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

## **Aim of RSE and the Mission Statement**

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child, we believe *in the "uniqueness of each individual"* and our aim is to support our young people in an inclusive, caring Catholic Community. We believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. We aim to help pupils grow in knowledge and understanding, recognize 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”<sup>4</sup> which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the whole person.

## Objectives

To develop the following **attitudes and virtues**:

- Reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility
- Respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others;
- Joy in the goodness of the created world and their own bodily natures
- Responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others
- Recognising and valuing their own sexual identity and that of others
- celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love
- Recognising the importance of marriage and family life
- Fidelity in relationships.

To develop the following **personal and social skills**:

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

To **know and understand**:

- The Church’s teaching on relationships and the nature and meaning of sexual love
- The Church’s teaching on marriage and the importance of marriage and family life
- The centrality and importance of virtue in guiding human living and loving
- The physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty
- The facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation
- How to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception
- How to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

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<sup>4</sup> Gravissimum Education 1

## **Outcomes**

### **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 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. (In looking at these questions, it is important to draw links to the school's inclusion policy).

### **Equalities Education**

The governing body have 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.

### **Broad Content of RSE**

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; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific relationships and sex curriculum which will be covered as part of our discreet PSHE curriculum.

Our programme will cover three **Core Themes**:

**1. Created and Loved by God**

This theme explores the individual

**2. Created to Love Others**

This theme explores the individual's relationship with others

**3. Created to Live in Community**

This theme explores the individual's relationship with the wider world

Within each theme there are the **Strands** of:

- Education in Virtue
- Religious Understanding
- RSHE Content

In **Theme 1 - Created and Loved by God**, the RSHE content topics are:

- Me, My Body and My Health
- Emotional Well-Being and Attitudes
- Life Cycles and Fertility

In **Theme 2 - Created to Love Others**, the RSHE content topics are:

- Personal Relationships
- Keeping Safe and People Who Can Help Me

In **Theme 3 - Created to Live in Community**, the RSHE content topics are:

- Living in the Wider World

Our programme is based on Primary and Secondary Catholic Curriculum for stages EYFS to KS5. This has been produced by the Catholic Education Service and been recognised as a work of good practice by the Department of Education.

## Programme/Resources

Appendices to this policy provide further information about the programme we are following 'Life to the Full' produced by 'Ten Ten' in conjunction with the Catholic Education Service. A variety of teaching strategies will be used to deliver the RSE curriculum. Pupils learning will be assessed using questionnaires that are part of the 'Life to the Full' programme that the Academy will be following.

## Parents and Carers

The Church recognises that parents are the first teachers of their children. It is their right and responsibility to inform and educate their children in matters relating to human relationships and sexual development. As a Catholic school we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children and seek to work in partnership with them by following these principles:

- Parents will be fully informed about the content and delivery of RSE on an annual basis
- Parents will be provided with opportunities to view and discuss the content of any programme of RSE along with any resources that are to be used; **(See appendix 1)**
- 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
- Parents will be consulted whenever the school's RSE policy is reviewed/updated; **(See appendix 1)**
- Parents will be fully informed about their statutory right to request their child be withdrawn from Sex Education
- 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 up to and until 3 terms before their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday (after this point if they child wishes to receive sex education, rather than be withdrawn the school will make arrangements to provide sex education during one of those terms<sup>5</sup>)
- Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by writing to the Headteacher
- It is expected that in the unlikely event that a parent wishes to exercise the right to withdraw their child, the school will discuss the request with the parents and if appropriate, with the child, to ensure that their concerns are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum, except for in exceptional circumstances this request will be respected up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16 (see above). The Academy will document this process to ensure a record is kept

Our aim is that every parent and carer will have full confidence in the school's RSE programme to meet their child's needs.

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

## 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 as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE (in secondary schools/academies relating 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

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<sup>5</sup> Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 4

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 lays with the Deputy Headteacher responsible for Catholic Life and Personal Development and the co-ordinator for PSHE, Head of Department for Science and Religious Education.

However, Relationship and Sex Education is a whole Academy responsibility. All staff are involved in developing the personal and social skills that contribute to human flourishing. As well as delivering curriculum content in the classroom, staff are also role models around the school, giving examples of conflict resolution and establishing relationships of mutual trust and respect. All staff have a responsibility of care and the safeguarding of pupils. Staff should actively contribute to guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of their pupils, in line with the school's Catholic ethos and current legislation. 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.

### **External Visitors**

Our school will often call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSE. 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'<sup>6</sup>.

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 RSE**

#### **Governors**

- Draw up the RSE 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 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.

#### **Headteacher**

Responsibility for the implementation of the RSE policy is delegated to the Deputy Headteacher Catholic Life and Personal Development Life and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, the Diocesan Schools'

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<sup>6</sup> CES Checklist for External Speakers to Schools, 2016

Service and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies, supported by the Headteacher. It is the task of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to integrate RSE into the school's curriculum.

### **Relationships and Sex Education Lead/Co-ordinator**

The Deputy Headteacher leading Catholic Life and Personal Development has oversight over secondary and primary phase provision and the Headteacher 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. All staff who will be delivering RSE will be expected to undertake the Catholic Education Service and Ten Ten Online Training course. An appropriately trained RSE Leader has been appointed to oversee curriculum planning, training and support for teachers at the primary phase. With governors and the Headteacher, there is a planned process for informing parents about RSE in the school. Elements of RSE will be delivered in different curricular areas for example in subjects such as Religious Education and Science.

### **Relationship to other policies and curriculum subjects**

This RSE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHE framework. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents (for example, Anti-bullying policy, Safeguarding Policy etc)

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

### **Children's 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.

### **Controversial or Sensitive issues**

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE. These may be 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. The governors believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. (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' 'Managing difficult questions', Page 23 for more detail)

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 questions 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 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 safeguarding lead.



## **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/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

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The PSHE/RSE Co-ordinator will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of learning 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 outcomes of the evaluation should be reported to these groups of interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.