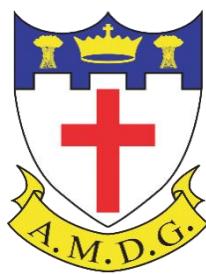


# **Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy**

## **Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College**



<b>Approved by:</b>	Full Governing Body	<b>Date:</b> January 26
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<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	
January 2025	

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*At Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College everything that we do is 'For the Greater Glory of God', therefore our core purpose is to develop virtuous young people of good character. Students will leave our college with the capacity to fulfil their vocation and play their part in building a better world. Our ambition is to share the joy of learning with our students and guide and challenge them to love and seek the Truth.*

*We recognise that knowledge has the power to transform us and that it is the birthright of all our students irrespective of their starting point or background. At our college students will know that they are loved.*

**In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions about Relationships and Sex and Health Education (RSHE). We set out our rationale for, and approach to relationships and sex education in the school. We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for students with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.**

### **Introduction**

As a Catholic college we understand that all our students are of intrinsic and absolute value as they are created by God and in the image of God. With this at the center of all our teaching, and in particular through our Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) we aim to make our teaching holistic and fitting to the needs of the students. Pope Francis spoke in his apostolic exhortation 'Amoris Laetitia' (Joy of Love) 2016 about the need for, 'a positive and prudent sex education' in our schools and it can only be seen within the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving.

The RSHE programme (furthermore known as RHE) at Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College is underpinned by the following Church teachings:

- the dignity and worth of each person made in the image of God
- the importance of individuals coming together in mutual support and regard, to live and work for the good of humankind and 'the greater glory of God' (A.M.D.G)

### **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" <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 Secondary schools RHE 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>2</sup>

<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 25

RHE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and social development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health. Whilst our programme meets the requirements set out by the DfE, it is our priority to encourage students to consider the views of the Roman Catholic Church and the value of the human person by abiding by diocesan guidance. The key aim of the programme is to provide a teaching that is founded on Roman Catholic understanding of the human person and an appreciation that authentic human love is more than sexual expression, for the human person is made in the image and likeness of God.

### **Statutory curriculum requirements**

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RHE 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).

However, the reasons for our inclusion of RHE 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 RHE 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. RHE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationship as it is there that sexuality grows and develops. This is why it is known as Relationships and Health Education (RHE) at Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College.

Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales and as advocated by the DFE (and the Welsh Assembly Government) RHE will be firmly embedded in the PSHE framework (Personal Development Education) as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils. It is centered 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 modern Britain.

### **Values and Virtues**

Our programme enshrines Catholic values relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life. We encourage all students to act out our College Virtues in order to become people of good character and the RHE programme also promotes those virtues which are essential in responding to the God's call to love others with a proper respect for their dignity and the

dignity of the human body. The following virtues will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

### **Aim of RHE and the mission statement**

AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM (A.M.D.G)– For the greater Glory of God

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) ensuring that everything we do is for the greater glory of God; we believe that RHE 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"<sup>3</sup> which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human 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;

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<sup>3</sup> Gravissimum Educationis 1

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

## **Outcomes**

### **Inclusion and quality first teaching**

We will ensure RHE 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 and abides by the Protected Characteristics in The Equality Act 2010. 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. Teachers of PDE will follow school policies and procedures of 'Knowing your students' in order to adapt lessons to suit the needs of our students ensuring that learning is taking place for all students.

### **Equalities obligations**

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.

## **The programme**

### **Guidance from the Catholic Education Service**

In designing our programs of study we have acted in accordance with the following advice:

- Students should be taught from an early age to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. They should be given accurate information. This will enable them to understand difference and help to remove prejudice
- Human sexuality (is a gift of God and) finds its perfect expression within loving life-long marriage. Any other physical sexual expression falls short to some degree of that ideal. It follows that human sexuality is not fulfilled in self-gratification or in promiscuous or casual relationships
- Traditional (Christian) marriage should be promoted as the fundamental building block of society and of family life and as the proper context for the nurture of children
- Students have a right to develop without being subject to any physical or verbal abuse about sexual orientation or to the encouragement of sexual activity
- Life-long celibacy can be fulfilling. In this way of life an individual's sexual instincts may be channeled into generous love and service of others
- Life-long human friendships are an important gift and should be honoured and cherished
- Human beings fall short of the ideal but the admission of failure can bring forgiveness and reconciliation. People can change their behaviour. Couples working through problems within marriage can find deeper love and strengthened

Three aspects of RHE - attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills will be provided under 3 headings:

1. Relationships and Health Education

2. Health and Wellbeing
3. Living in the wider world

### **Aims of the Programme**

The students will be able to:

- Understand their own and others' God given gift of sexuality, developing respect for themselves and others. Meet the challenge and responsibilities that sexuality maturity will bring
- Understand and control their emotions and feelings to enable individuals to interact appropriately, more effectively in groups. Know, identify and understand the physical, emotional moral stages of their development

### **Objectives**

- Know and understand the teachings of beliefs of the Catholic Church on Sexuality and respect for others
- Explore moral values/family values, religious values, gender roles and stereotyping
- Know, identify and understand the physical, emotional and moral stages of their development
- Explore and develop an understanding of a variety of personal relationships from friendship to intimacy
- To provide an opportunity for students to examine their own and others' attitudes to sexual activity and related issues
- To promote an awareness of the pressure on young people to behave in certain ways and to help improve assertiveness and the confidence to cope with such pressure
- Develop a variety of strategies to enable students to make autonomous decisions in a wide range of situations so that they develop a critical questioning of moral viewpoints
- Further develop personal skills and qualities: i.e. listening, questioning, communicating, standpoint taking, valuing the opinion of others, empathy etc.

### **RSHE Content**

**Key Stage 3 (age 11-14, Years 7 – 9)** The RHE Curriculum addresses three main themes:

1. Created and Loved by God - The Christian imperative to love self, made in the image and likeness of God, shows an understanding of the importance of valuing and understanding oneself as the basis for personal relationships.
2. Created to love others - God is love. We are created out of love and for love. The command to love is the basis of all Christian morality.
3. Created to live in community (local, national and global) - Human beings are relational by nature and live in the wider community. Through our exchange with others, our mutual service and through dialogue, we attempt to proclaim and extend the Kingdom of God for the good of individuals and the good of society.

These themes aim to nurture the following personal qualities and values:

- Growing to be respectful of our bodies, character and giftedness
- Appreciative for blessings
- Grateful to others and to God
- Self-disciplined and able to delay or forego gratification for the sake of greater goods
- Discerning in their decision making
- Determined and resilient in the face of difficulty
- Courageous in the face of new situations and in facing their fears
- Loyal, able to develop and sustain friendships

- Compassionate, able to empathise with the suffering of others and the generosity to help others in trouble
- Respectful, able to identify other people's personal space and respect the ways in which they are different  
Forgiving, developing the skills to allow reconciliation in relationships
- Courteous in their dealings with friends and strangers
- Honesty, committed to living truthfully and with integrity
- Just, understanding the impact of their actions locally, nationally and globally
- Self-giving, able to put aside their own wants in order to serve others locally, nationally and globally
- Prophetic in their ability to identify injustice and speak out against it locally, nationally and globally

**Students will be taught:**

**Theme 1: Created and Loved by God**

- To appreciate sensual pleasure as a gift from God
- To recognise that sexuality is a God-given gift and that sexual intercourse is the most intimate expression of human love and should be delayed until marriage
- The Church's teaching on the morality of natural and artificial methods of managing fertility
- To understand the need for reflection to facilitate personal growth and the role prayer can play in this
- To understand that their uniqueness, value and dignity derive from God and hence recognise the respect they should have for themselves
- To recognise that they are responsible for their own behaviour and how to inform their conscience
- To recognise their personal strengths
- To distinguish 'needs' from 'wants'
- They have a right not to have an intimate relationship until the appropriate time and that any level of intimacy which makes them feel uncomfortable is never appropriate
- To appreciate all five senses and to be able to separate sensuality from sexuality
- There are many different body shapes, sizes and physical attributes
- Media portrayals of the human body may present a false ideal of bodily perfection which does not reflect real life and can have negative impact on the individual
- How to take care of their body and the importance of taking increased responsibility for their own personal hygiene
- How to develop self-confidence and self-esteem
- The importance and benefits of delaying sexual intercourse until ready
- There are different emotions which may emerge in relation to change and loss and strategies to manage them
- How to develop the skills needed to identify and resist peer and other types of pressure to conform
- The concepts of sexual identity, gender identity and sexual orientation
- To recognise, clarify and if necessary challenge their values, attitudes and beliefs and to understand how these influence their choices
- Human reproduction, including the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems
- About gestation and birth, including the effect of maternal lifestyle on the foetus through the placenta, e.g. foetal alcohol syndrome
- About human fertility, methods of managing conception for the purposes of achieving or avoiding pregnancy and the difference between natural and artificial methods

- The menstrual cycle and the function of gametes (sperm and ova), in fertilisation.
- The negative impact of substance use on both male and female fertility

### **Theme 2: Created to love others**

- The nature of sacramental marriage and the importance of marriage as the foundation of society and its role in the domestic Church
- The role of marriage as the basis of family life and its importance to the bringing up of children
- Recognise the spiritual context of the family as a community where members can grow in faith, hope and love
- How to express love and care for others through acts of charity
- How to discuss religious faith and personal beliefs with others
- Recognise the importance of forgiveness in relationships and know something about Jesus' teaching on forgiveness
- Pupils should be taught:
  - About discrimination, prejudice and bullying and how to respond, including responsibilities towards those who are experiencing these things (See protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010, Part 2, Chapter 1, sections 4-12)
- The features of positive and stable relationships and the virtues needed to sustain them (e.g. trust, mutual respect, honesty) in a wide variety of contexts, including family, class, friendships, intimate relationships etc.
- That relationships can cause strong feelings and emotions (including sexual attraction) and methods for managing these. The nature and importance of friendship as the basis of a loving, sexual relationship.
- That someone else's expectations in a relationship may be different to yours and strategies for negotiating possible differences.
- The nature and importance of marriage; the distinctions between marriage in Church teaching, including sacramental marriage, civil marriage, civil partnerships and other stable, long-term relationships.
- The roles, rights and responsibilities of parents, carers and children in families and that those families can be varied and complex
- Understand that loving, supportive family relationships provide the best environment for a child
- That marriage is a commitment, entered into freely, never forced through threat or coercion.
- Some people will choose to be celibate (unmarried) and to refrain from sexual activity, e.g. single people, priests and those in religious life
 

There is diversity in sexual attraction and developing sexuality, including sources of support and reassurance and how to access them
- They have autonomy and the right to protect their body from inappropriate and unwanted contact
- To identify the characteristics of unhealthy relationships and where to get help
- Consent is freely given and that being pressurised, manipulated or coerced to agree to something is not 'consent'
- The law in relation to consent, including the legal age of consent for sexual activity, the legal definition of consent and the responsibility in law for the seeker of consent to ensure that consent has been given.
- How to use technology safely, including social media and consideration of their "digital footprint" and the law regarding the sharing of images
- That not all images, language and behaviour are appropriate, including the negative effects of pornography and the dangers of online exploitation

- Recognise the impact that the use of substances has on the ability to make good and healthy decisions
- There are a number of different people and appropriate organisations they can go to for help in different situations and should be provided with information about how to contact them

### **Theme 3: Created to live in community**

- To discuss moral questions in a balanced and well-informed way
- Understand the features of the home, school and parish and how each work for the good of all
- The purpose and importance of immunisation and vaccination
- That certain infections can be spread through sexual activity, including HIV, and ways of protecting against sexually transmitted infections, including abstinence
- The physical and emotional damage caused by female genital mutilation (FGM); that it is a criminal act and where to get support for themselves or their peers
- They have responsibilities towards their local, global and national community and creation
- There are some cultural practices which are against UK law and Universal Rights (e.g. FGM, forced marriages, honour based violence, human trafficking, radicalisation etc.); to have the skills and strategies to respond to being targeted or witnessing the targeting of others
- That discriminatory language and behaviour is unacceptable (e.g. sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist) and the need to challenge it and how to do so.
- The potential tensions between human rights, English law and cultural and religious expectations and practices

### **Key Stage 4 (age 14-16 Years 10 – 11)**

The Key Stage 4 RSE Curriculum follows the same three main themes. Students will be taught:

#### **Theme 1: Created and Loved by God**

- To appreciate sensual pleasure as a gift from God and the difference between sensual and sexual pleasure;
- The concept of fasts and feasts and the importance of self-discipline and moderation
- To recognise that sexuality is a God-given gift and that sexual intercourse is the most intimate expression of human love and should be delayed until marriage, building on learning at KS3
- The Church's teaching on the morality of natural and artificial methods of managing fertility, building on learning at KS3
- That giving time to prayer and reflection is a way of growing in understanding of themselves and their own character, as well as deepening their relationship with God.
- The methods of informing one's conscience and the absolute character of conscientious demands
- To evaluate their own personal strengths and areas for development
- How virtues, values, attitudes and beliefs can drive a growing sense of purpose for their lives
- The influences on their body image including the media's portrayal of idealised and artificial body shapes
- The health risks and issues related to this, including cosmetic procedures
- To take increased responsibility for monitoring their own health (including testicular and breast self-examination)
- The characteristics of emotional and mental health, including stress, anxiety and depression, self-harm and suicide and their potential impact on self and others
- The importance and benefits of delaying sexual intercourse until ready, considering the idea of appropriateness and the importance of marriage
- Strategies for managing mental health and emotional well-being

- How to develop the skills needed to identify and resist peer and other types of pressure to conform
- To recognise, clarify and if necessary challenge their values, attitudes and beliefs and to understand how these influence their choices
- Human reproduction, including the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems and the correct terms for the reproductive body parts, both internal and external
- About gestation and birth, including the effect of maternal lifestyle on the foetus through the placenta, e.g. foetal alcohol syndrome
- The different stages in the development of an unborn child in the womb from the moment of conception to birth
- About human fertility, building on the learning at KS3; methods of managing conception for the purposes of achieving or avoiding pregnancy and the difference between natural and artificial methods.
- That fertility levels can vary in different people; can be damaged by some sexually transmitted infections and decreases with age
- The negative impact of substance-use on both male and female fertility and those positive lifestyle choices which maximise fertility

### **Theme 2: Created to love others**

- Understand what the Church teaches about marriage, and when it is a Sacrament and the distinction between separation, divorce and nullity
- The role of marriage as the basis of family life and its importance to the bringing up of children, including an understanding of how the Church supports family life
- Know and understand what human and divine attributes, virtues and skills are required to sustain a happy, authentic marriage which is lifelong and life giving
- To recognise their responsibilities towards others, and the human dignity of others in God's eyes
- To be able to discuss faith and personal belief sensitively, demonstrating mutual respect
- To understand the importance of self-giving love and forgiveness in a relationship
- The sanctity of life, and the significance of this concept in debates about abortion
- To evaluate the extent to which their self-confidence and self-esteem are affected by the judgments of others
- The characteristics and benefits of positive, strong, supportive, equal relationships
- To manage changes in personal relationships including the ending of relationships
- About harassment and how to manage this
- To recognise when others are using manipulation, persuasion or coercion and how to respond
- Parenting skills and qualities and their central importance to family life (including the implications of young parenthood)
- The nature and importance of marriage; the difference between sacramental and civil marriage, civil partnerships and other stable, long-term relationships.
- About the impact of domestic and relationship violence (including sources of help and support)
- The impact of separation, divorce and bereavement on individuals and families and the need to adapt to changing circumstances
- About diversity in sexual attraction and developing sexuality, including sources of support and reassurance and how to access them
- An awareness of exploitation, bullying and harassment in relationships (including the unique challenges posed by online bullying and the unacceptability of physical, emotional, sexual

abuse in all types of teenage relationships, including in group settings such as gangs) and how to respond

- The concept of consent in relevant, age-appropriate contexts building on Key Stage 3, how to seek consent and to respect others' right to give, not give or withdraw consent
- The risks and consequences of legal and illegal substance use including on their ability to make good decisions in relation to sexual relationships
- To understand the pernicious influence of gender double standards and victim-blaming
- To understand the consequences of unintended pregnancy and of teenage parenthood (in the context of learning about parenting skills and qualities and their importance to family life)
- About abortion, including the current legal position, the risks associated with it, the Church's position and other beliefs and opinions about it
- About statutory and voluntary organisations that support relationships experiencing difficulties or in crisis, such as relationship breakdown, separation, divorce, or bereavement
- The importance of the school, the parish and other Catholic voluntary organisations in providing help and advice for young people
- Where and how to obtain sexual health information, advice and support
- About who to talk to for accurate, impartial advice and support in the event of unintended pregnancy

### **Theme 3: Created to live in community**

- To debate moral questions in a way which is well informed, nuanced and sensitive, taking into account the teaching of the Catholic Church in the relevant areas
- The main principles of Catholic Social Teaching and how these relate to our relationship to each other and to creation

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure 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, 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).

### **Procedures and Practice**

We follow the Department for Education's statutory guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) 2019. This is taught both explicitly through PDE and via the wider curriculum; For example Science and RE include elements of sex education contained in their respective curriculums. As a secondary school we must provide RHE to all pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017.

In teaching RHE, we are 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. In curriculum areas where RHE is delivered, content and methods are designed to be appropriate to the age and general development of students in the group and are sensitive to all religious belief and cultural practices. Outside agencies as appropriate may be engaged when the quality of learning outcome and resources allow.

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

This RHE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHE framework under the banner of Personal Development Education (PDE). It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents (for example, Bullying policy, Safeguarding Policy, SEND policy 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 in accordance with our policies on SEND, Disadvantaged Students and Teaching and Learning.

### **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 RHE 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 RHE (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 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.

### **Delivering the Program**

#### **Responsibility for delivering the program**

Responsibility for the specific Relationships and Health Education programme lays with Mrs Wright the Assistant Head Teacher in charge of PDE and citizenship, and the Curriculum lead, Mrs Guppy.

However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RHE 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.

Relationships and Health Education is not limited to any one department, however much of the RHE curriculum is taught by RE teachers in KS3. RHE is also taught in Science, the wider PDE Curriculum and is built upon through Personal Development and Health days throughout the year.

Reinforcement of the taught programme and further opportunities for learning arise on an informal level and in particular through assemblies and discussion in Physical Education, English etc. This is enhanced through individual guidance and counselling.

Teachers aim to develop and teach in a safe environment, an atmosphere of mutual support and respect. Students should be encouraged to express their own views and have respect for the views of others. Relationships and Health Education should not be seen as simply imparting information but is a development of attitudes and values, developing people of good character.

Teachers are aware that students have experience of a range of ideas and information from a variety of media sources and many of these will be contrary to the values of the Catholic and Christian Community. Catholic virtues and values will always be promoted and upheld.

### **Visitors and Health Professionals**

We welcome the support and professional help of a variety of health professionals and outside speakers with experience of this area. All outside speakers are approved by the Senior Leadership Team. All visiting speakers are made aware of the ethos of the college and will only be invited to speak if they are supportive of it.

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'.<sup>4</sup> (Appendix 2)

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.

### **Controversial or Sensitive issues**

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RHE. 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 RHE programme. The use of ground rules, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. (See also Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, 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. This should be addressed after the lesson, or following the schools training and procedures on disclosures.

### **Confidentiality**

Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RHE takes place. 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. Teachers and other staff recognise the importance of listening to the concerns of individual students and are aware that young males sometimes find it more difficult than females to express emotions – careful listening and support is important.

- Students must be aware that the classroom is not a confidential area
- The school nurse is available to all students on site, one lunch time a week for personal confidential advice and support
- All college staff can give details of external help and support agencies to students and should explain to students the importance of talking to a parent/carer

If a member of staff suspects that a child or young person is a victim of or is at risk of abuse (illegal or non-consenting activities), they are required to follow the Child Protection Policy as part of the school's safeguarding guidance and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible. The Assistant Headteacher Miss Mason should be consulted immediately if the child is in danger or risk of immediate harm. In her absence the Deputy Safeguarding lead teachers will be informed.

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<sup>4</sup> CES Checklist for External Speakers to Schools, 2022 (Appendix 2)

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 RHE 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 systems. 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.

### **Assessment and Monitoring**

The RHE programme will be monitored by the Curriculum lead who is responsible for following the school procedures of quality assurance. Students' opinion and evaluations will be sought as to the effectiveness of their studies. The PDE curriculum lead will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils work. The programme will be evaluated annually by means of questionnaires / response sheets / needs assessment given to pupils, and / or by discussion with pupils, staff and parents. The results of the evaluation should be reported to these groups of interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

Whilst there is no formal examined assessment for RHE, teachers will assess understanding and capture progress using a range of formative assessment, for example, short tests, quizzes as well as journalling or self-evaluations.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### **The Governing Board**

- 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., SEND, 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 RHE within PSHE.

#### **The Headteacher**

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, also appropriate agencies.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RHE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from [non-statutory/non-science] components of Sex Education.

#### **PSHE/RHE Co-Ordinator – PDE Curriculum lead**

The Assistant Headteacher in charge of PDE and citizenship alongside the Curriculum lead and 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 Miss Mason, the member of staff with responsibility for child protection.

### **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.

All teachers will be expected to teach RHE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school and appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RHE. Staff will be trained on the delivery of RHE as part of our continuing professional development calendar. The Headteacher may also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to 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. Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RHE in a sensitive way
- Attending relevant CPD opportunities
- Modelling positive attitudes to RHE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the [non-statutory/non-science] components of Sex Education.

### **Students**

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

### **Pregnant Teenagers**

All pregnant teenagers will be cared for and enabled to attend school throughout their pregnancy until a date advised by a doctor. A base will be made for them in Sanctuary if the student and their parents feel it is appropriate.

### **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 material to be shared with their children at home and at times workshops to help parents/carers to find out more where appropriate. Parents/carers can use the information on the school website to know 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.

Parents will be informed of this policy via the school website. They will be consulted of any developments of the RHE programme and will be able to view samples of resources used by the school in the RHE programme. Our aim is that every parent and carer will have full confidence in the school's programme to meet their child's needs.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Sex Education, except in those elements which are required by the Science National Curriculum. In addition, parents do not have the right to withdraw from elements which are considered to come under the umbrella term of 'Relationships' or 'Health' education. In our school context, Sex Education can only be seen within the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving. The key aim of the programme is to provide a teaching that is founded on Roman Catholic understanding of the human person and an appreciation that authentic human love is more than sexual expression, for the human person is made in the image and likeness of God. RHE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of Relationships Education as it is there that sexuality grows and develops; these areas of learning are taught within the context of family life. As such there is no context in which Sex Education is taught independently from Health or Relationships Education, negating the need to withdraw a child from RHE at Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College.

Should parents wish to inquire about withdrawing their children, they are asked to notify the school by contacting the headteacher. Any formal requests should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 1 of this policy and addressed to the Headteacher. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The Headteacher will discuss the request with parents as we believe the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed; appropriate action will be taken. Any alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education. 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).

### **Complaints Procedure**

A curriculum complaints policy document can be obtained from the school.

### **Additional information**

#### **Documents that have been consulted:**

- A model Catholic Secondary RSE Curriculum (CES)
- Department for Education's statutory guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) 2024.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Equality Act 2010 and schools
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (advice for schools)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (advice for schools, including advice on Cyberbullying)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools (advice for schools)
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools (guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC)

### **Policy development**

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy
4. Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSHE
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified

**Appendix 1: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within Relationships, Sex and Health Education**

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	

## Appendix 2: External visitor checklist from the Catholic Education Service



# CHECKLIST FOR EXTERNAL SPEAKERS / ORGANISATIONS INVITED TO SCHOOLS

In this checklist '**School(s)**' means all Catholic school(s). For the avoidance of doubt this includes:

- Catholic voluntary aided schools;
- Catholic independent schools (including Catholic academies);
- Catholic sixth form colleges; and
- Catholic non-maintained special schools.<sup>1</sup>

As an integral part of its educational vision for the holistic formation of children and young people, the Catholic Church expects Catholic schools to promote and uphold high standards throughout their activities and this includes visits from external speakers.

All external speakers invited to schools should be of the highest quality and school leaders are responsible for ensuring that they have enough information about the content to be delivered by any external speaker to enable them to determine whether the content will be pitched at the right level for the age and level of maturity of the children and young people to whom the external speakers will present. All schools should have clear policies for the booking of external speakers which includes sign-off of the booking at an appropriately senior level and compliance with safeguarding checks.

Schools should also be mindful of the DfE guidance on "political impartiality in schools" which can be found by following this link:

[Political impartiality in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/political-impartiality-in-schools)

This checklist should be completed *prior* to welcoming (and establishing collaborative relationships with) external speakers (and any organisation they represent) to ensure that the Catholic character of your school is preserved and developed in the external speaker's communications with pupils and parents and carers.

Name of Speaker		
Question	Answer	Actions needed/Comment

<p>Will the Speaker be supervised at all times during their visit?</p> <p>If not, why not?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FURTHER COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Have you carried out safeguarding checks (if appropriate) for the Speaker and have these been recorded in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FURTHER COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Has the Speaker understood and confirmed that their communications in the school will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be respectful towards Catholic teachings</li> <li>• Not be prejudicial or detrimental to the Catholic character of the school</li> <li>• Not engage pupils in political activity and</li> <li>• Not cover certain partisan political views which are not deemed relevant or appropriate (provide details if applicable)</li> <li>• Be delivered in accordance with the requirements set out in the DfE's guidance on political</li> </ul>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FURTHER COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	

impartiality in schools (if appropriate)		
Have you reviewed the resources/materials that will be used by the Speaker?	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FURTHER COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
Have you reviewed other resources produced by the Speaker (and by any organisation the speaker represents) even if they will not form part of the speaker's activities at the school?	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FURTHER COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
Have you conducted a general internet search using the Speaker's name (e.g. a google search)? If parents or children and young people conducted a similar search are any concerns likely to arise?	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FURTHER COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
Can you confirm that the political views espoused by the speaker/speaker's organisation are in compliance with British values and do not involve taking an extreme political position?	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FURTHER COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
Have school policies and procedures applicable to the speaker been	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>	

explained to and understood by the Speaker?	FURTHER COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any other outstanding issues or concerns with the Speaker and/or their suitability?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> FURTHER COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/>	
Will the Speaker deliver content of a high quality that is appropriate to the age and maturity of the children or young people in the audience?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> FURTHER COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/>	

**If you have any concerns regarding the suitability of this Speaker, you should contact your Diocese to seek further clarification.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

Approved for booking

Senior Staff member Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_