



The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL,

A VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

"Nurturing heart, mind and faith."

St Mary's School Mission Statement

Policy review date- Autumn 2026

Person Responsible- Helen Tomlinson

Ratified by Academy Council- Autumn 2026

Review date- Autumn 2029

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Knaresborough
Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, our mission is at the heart of everything we do. Our Catholic faith shapes our vision for education and our understanding of the human person. We seek to create a nurturing, inclusive and aspirational environment in which every child is recognised as a unique individual made in the image and likeness of God.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) plays an important role in enabling us to fulfil this mission. Through our RSHE curriculum, children are supported to develop healthy relationships, understand their own worth and dignity, make informed decisions and become responsible members of society. The curriculum encourages children to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially and physically, equipping them with the knowledge and virtues needed to flourish throughout their lives.

1. Introduction

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that children are growing up in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. They encounter diverse influences through their families, friendships, communities, media and the online environment. As they move through childhood, they face a range of opportunities and challenges which require them to make choices, build relationships, recognise risk and understand how to keep themselves safe.

We believe that high-quality Relationships, Sex and Health Education is essential in helping children navigate these challenges successfully. RSHE provides pupils with the knowledge, understanding, skills and values that enable them to form positive relationships, care for their physical and mental wellbeing and make responsible choices. It supports children in understanding themselves and others while promoting respect, compassion and responsibility.

As a Catholic school, our approach to RSHE is rooted firmly in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the mission of the Church. We believe that every person has an inherent dignity given by God and that relationships should reflect love, respect, forgiveness, faithfulness and self-giving. The curriculum therefore seeks not only to meet statutory requirements but also to nurture pupils' moral and spiritual development.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Department for Education's *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance* published in July 2025 and the Catholic Education Service Model Framework Policy (2026). It reflects the unique Catholic character of our school whilst ensuring that pupils are fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

2. Catholic Rationale

The foundation of our RSHE curriculum is the belief that every human person is created by God, loved by God and called to live life to the full. Jesus teaches us that human flourishing is found through loving relationships with God, with ourselves and with others. Consequently, relationships education occupies a central place within Catholic education.

At the heart of Christian belief is the understanding of God as Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit living in perfect communion. Human beings are created for relationship, and the desire to love and be loved reflects something of God's own nature. Through RSHE, children are helped to understand that relationships are a gift from God and form an essential part of human life.

Our curriculum promotes a positive understanding of the human person and human sexuality. We teach that every individual deserves dignity and respect and that our bodies are gifts from God which should be treated with care. Children are encouraged to recognise their own worthwhile developing respect for the worth and dignity of others.

Catholic teaching places particular value on family life as the foundation of society. While celebrating the importance of marriage and family, we also recognise the diversity of circumstances experienced by families within our school community. Every child and every family is valued, respected and welcomed within our school community.

The purpose of RSHE is therefore not simply to provide information. It is about supporting pupils to become compassionate, responsible and virtuous individuals who are able to build healthy relationships, contribute positively to society and respond to God's call in their lives.

3. Aims of RSHE

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, RSHE aims to support pupils in becoming healthy, confident and caring individuals who understand both their responsibilities and their value within society.

Through RSHE, we aim to help pupils develop a secure sense of identity and self-worth. We want children to understand that they are uniquely created and loved by God and that this truth provides the foundation for positive mental health, resilience and wellbeing.

We aim to enable children to establish and maintain healthy relationships characterised by mutual respect, honesty, empathy and kindness. Pupils learn how to communicate effectively, resolve disagreements appropriately and appreciate the importance of friendship, family and community. Another central aim is to support children in understanding their physical and emotional development. Pupils are given age-appropriate information about human growth and change, allowing them to approach adolescence with confidence and understanding.

RSHE also aims to strengthen safeguarding by helping children recognise unsafe situations, understand personal boundaries, protect themselves online and know where to seek help if they have concerns. The curriculum equips pupils with practical strategies to promote their own wellbeing and safety.

Finally, we seek to prepare children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life by fostering resilience, independence, critical thinking and responsible decision-making.

4. Statutory Requirements

Relationships Education is compulsory for all pupils in primary schools. Health Education is also compulsory in all primary schools and academies. In addition, aspects of human growth and reproduction are taught through the National Curriculum for Science.

The statutory guidance places particular emphasis on helping children develop healthy relationships, positive mental wellbeing and the skills necessary to stay safe in both physical and digital environments. The updated 2025 guidance strengthens expectations around online safety, personal safety, safeguarding, privacy, digital literacy, bereavement education and mental wellbeing. These developments have been fully incorporated into our curriculum planning.

While fulfilling our statutory responsibilities, all teaching remains consistent with Catholic teaching and the mission of the school.

5. Curriculum Intent

The RSHE curriculum at St Mary's aims to develop knowledge gradually and progressively as children move through the school. Learning is carefully sequenced to ensure that pupils revisit key concepts at increasing levels of depth and maturity.

The school uses the Diocese-approved **Life to the Full** programme developed by Ten:Ten Resources as the main vehicle for delivering RSHE. This programme is rooted in Catholic teaching and provides a comprehensive framework through which statutory requirements can be met.

The curriculum is organised around three key themes:

Created and Loved by God explores individual dignity, self-worth, emotional wellbeing, healthy lifestyles and human development.

Created to Love Others focuses on relationships, friendships, family life, personal safety and understanding the importance of love and respect.

Created to Live in Community encourages children to understand their responsibilities within society and their vocation to contribute positively to the wider world.
Learning is enhanced through class discussion, prayer, reflection, assemblies, retreats, CollectiveWorship, Catholic Social Teaching and opportunities to live out Gospel values in everyday school life.

6. Responding to New Statutory Guidance

The updated statutory guidance published in 2025 places greater emphasis on helping children understand the realities of modern life. The guidance reflects the increasing role of technology in children's lives and the growing importance of personal safety and mental wellbeing.

At St Mary's, pupils will receive age-appropriate teaching about online behaviour, digital citizenship and responsible use of technology. Children learn about privacy settings, digital footprints, personal information, online relationships and the importance of critical thinking when engaging with online content.

The curriculum also addresses newer areas such as online financial harms, including scams, fraud, gaming monetisation and manipulative online practices. Pupils develop awareness of how to make safe decisions and recognise situations which may place them at risk.

Another important development is the increased emphasis on personal safety. Pupils learn about water safety, road safety, rail safety and fire safety alongside broader themes of risk assessment, responsibility and informed decision-making.

The curriculum also recognises the importance of supporting children's emotional wellbeing. Pupils are helped to understand grief, loss, change and transition and develop strategies for managing challenging emotions. This reflects the growing recognition of mental health as a fundamental aspect of children's overall wellbeing.

7. Inclusion and Adaptive Practice

We believe that every child should be able to access and benefit from RSHE regardless of ability, background or need. The curriculum is therefore delivered through an inclusive and adaptive approach which respects the individual needs and circumstances of all pupils.

Teachers carefully consider pupils' developmental stages, learning needs and previous experiences when planning lessons. Learning may be adapted through the use of visual supports, alternative resources, preteaching of vocabulary, small group work and other reasonable adjustments.

Where pupils have SEND, staff work collaboratively to ensure that learning is accessible whilst maintaining high expectations. Our aim is that every child develops the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.

We are committed to creating a classroom climate where all pupils feel respected, valued and included. Differences are explored sensitively and positively, helping children understand that every person is deserving of dignity and respect.

8. Equality and Diversity

The school recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils.

Through RSHE, children learn that diversity is a natural and valued part of society. They are encouraged to recognise similarities and differences between people and to challenge prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination.

Teaching promotes respect for all members of society whilst remaining faithful to Catholic teaching. Pupils are supported to understand that disagreement should never result in disrespect and that every person deserves to be treated fairly and with dignity.

9. Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a central principle underpinning all RSHE provision at St Mary's. High-quality RSHE contributes significantly to the school's responsibility to protect children from harm and promote their welfare.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships, understand personal boundaries and identify situations that may place them at risk. Children develop the confidence to seek help and the language needed to communicate concerns effectively.

The updated statutory guidance highlights the importance of teaching children correct anatomical vocabulary, including the names of body parts and genitalia. At St Mary's, this teaching is delivered sensitively and appropriately as part of a safeguarding curriculum that helps children communicate clearly and accurately when discussing their bodies, health or safety.

Online safety forms a key part of safeguarding education. Pupils learn how to protect personal information, recognise inappropriate content, report concerns and develop safe habits when using technology.

Staff understand that sensitive discussions may sometimes lead to disclosures. Any safeguarding concerns arising from RSHE lessons are managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and relevant statutory guidance.

10. Parents and Carers

The school recognises that parents and carers are the primary educators of their children. Successful RSHE therefore depends upon a strong partnership between home and school.

We are committed to working openly and collaboratively with parents and carers. Information regarding curriculum content is made available to families, and opportunities are provided to view resources and discuss any questions or concerns.

Where sensitive content is planned, parents will be informed in advance. We encourage parents to continue conversations at home and to reinforce key learning in ways that reflect their own family values and experiences.

Our aim is that parents feel fully informed and confident about the school's approach and understand how RSHE supports both the wellbeing and safeguarding of children.

11. Right to Withdraw

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from Relationships Education, Health Education or those elements taught through National Curriculum Science. These areas are statutory requirements for all pupils.

Parents retain the right to request withdrawal from any additional sex education content that falls outside the National Curriculum Science requirements. Such requests should be made directly to the Headteacher, who will discuss the request with parents and explain the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

Whilst respecting parental rights, the school believes that the classroom is the safest and most effective environment in which this learning can take place and will always seek to work positively in partnership with families.

12. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The school is committed to ensuring that RSHE remains effective, relevant and responsive to the needs of pupils. Regular monitoring is undertaken by school leaders through planning scrutiny, pupil voice activities, lesson observations and discussions with staff.

The impact of the curriculum is evaluated through ongoing assessment, pupil feedback and parental engagement. Governors receive reports relating to the implementation and effectiveness of the policy and fulfil their statutory responsibilities through regular review and challenge.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if changes to statutory guidance, diocesan requirements or local circumstances make this necessary.