St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Approved: September 2026

Next Review Date: September 2027

1. Context

St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School is a Catholic school within the Diocese of East Anglia.

Our Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy is rooted in the mission and teaching of the Catholic Church and is informed by the guidance of the Catholic Education Service (CES), the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the Diocese of East Anglia.

The policy also has regard to the statutory Department for Education guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education, which applies from 1 September 2026.

The Catholic Education Service states that Catholic RSE should be faithful to the Church's vision of human wholeness, involve parents as the primary educators of their children, promote a positive understanding of human dignity and sexuality, and be delivered in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner.

At St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School, RSE is part of our wider curriculum and contributes to the spiritual, moral, social, emotional and physical development of every pupil.

2. Mission

Our school mission is:

Inspiring Lives

Our Catholic faith underpins teaching and learning throughout the school.

We believe that every person is created in the image and likeness of God and possesses inherent dignity and worth.

RSE therefore seeks to help pupils understand themselves as unique and valued individuals, created and loved by God, and to develop the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills needed to form healthy and respectful relationships.

Our approach is grounded in:

- dignity and respect for every person;
- love and care for others;
- the importance of family life;
- responsibility for our own actions;
- respect for the dignity and boundaries of others;
- compassion and forgiveness;
- honesty and integrity;
- the development of virtues;
- the Catholic understanding of human flourishing;
- safeguarding and protection from harm.

3. Aims

The school recognises that parents and carers are the primary educators of their children, particularly in matters relating to relationships, personal development and sexuality.

Our RSE programme therefore seeks to support and complement the education provided by parents and carers, rather than replace it.

We aim to:

- provide a coherent and age-appropriate programme of Relationships Education;
- provide age-appropriate teaching about human development and sex education where appropriate;
- enable pupils to understand and respect their own bodies and the bodies of others;
- develop pupils' understanding of healthy, respectful relationships;
- help pupils understand the importance of family life;

- develop pupils' ability to recognise appropriate and inappropriate behaviour;
- help pupils understand personal boundaries and consent in an age-appropriate way;
- develop pupils' confidence to seek help when something does not feel right;
- support pupils to recognise and respond to risks, including online risks;
- promote respect, dignity, kindness and responsibility;
- provide accurate and age-appropriate information;
- ensure teaching is consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church;
- work closely with parents and carers;
- ensure that pupils with SEND and other additional needs are appropriately supported;
- contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

4. Catholic Understanding of the Human Person

RSE at St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School is founded on a Catholic understanding of the human person.

We teach that:

- every human person is created in the image and likeness of God;
- every person has inherent dignity and worth;
- our bodies are gifts and should be treated with respect;
- relationships should be characterised by love, respect, honesty and responsibility;
- human sexuality is understood within the Catholic vision of the whole person;
- marriage and family life have a particular importance within Catholic teaching;
- pupils should learn to make wise and responsible choices;
- relationships should never involve coercion, exploitation, abuse or violence;
- every person should be treated with dignity, kindness and compassion.

Teaching will be faithful to the Catholic Church's teaching while recognising that pupils live within a diverse contemporary society.

The school will not seek to impose religious belief through inappropriate or coercive teaching. Rather, pupils will be given opportunities to understand Catholic teaching and to reflect on the moral and spiritual dimensions of relationships and human dignity.

5. Statutory Framework

The school will have regard to the current statutory DfE guidance on Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education.

For primary pupils, Relationships Education is statutory.

Health Education is also statutory in state-funded schools.

Sex education is not compulsory at primary level beyond the biological content required by the National Curriculum for Science. However, the school may provide additional, age-appropriate sex education where it considers this appropriate to the needs of its pupils and consistent with Catholic teaching.

The school's programme will therefore distinguish appropriately between:

- Relationships Education;
- Health Education;
- Science;
- additional sex education;
- Religious Education;
- wider PSHE/personal development provision.

These areas will complement rather than duplicate one another.

6. Curriculum Content

RSE is taught through a planned programme and is also supported through other areas of the curriculum. At St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School, RSE contributes to teaching about:

Relationships

Pupils learn about:

- families and people who care for them;
- friendships;
- positive relationships;
- kindness and respect;
- trust;
- communication;
- managing disagreements;
- recognising unhealthy relationships;
- appropriate boundaries;
- personal space;
- seeking help;
- responsibility towards others.

Respect and Dignity

Pupils learn:

- that every person is unique and valuable;
- to respect themselves and others;
- to recognise that people may be different;
- to challenge unkindness, prejudice and bullying;
- that nobody should be subjected to abuse or humiliation.

Keeping Safe

Pupils learn about:

- appropriate and inappropriate touch;
- personal boundaries;
- recognising when something feels unsafe;
- trusted adults;
- how to seek help;
- safeguarding;
- online safety;
- digital communication;
- appropriate behaviour online;
- recognising and reporting harmful content or behaviour.

Bodies and Growing Up

Pupils learn about:

- naming body parts appropriately;
- personal hygiene;
- physical development;
- changes associated with growing up;

- puberty;
- emotional changes;
- menstruation;
- personal care and dignity;
- the reproductive process at an age-appropriate level.

Health and Wellbeing

Pupils learn about:

- healthy lifestyles;
- physical activity;
- nutrition;
- sleep;
- hygiene;
- emotional wellbeing;
- managing feelings;
- resilience;
- self-respect;
- seeking help.

Family Life

Pupils learn about:

- the importance of family;
- different family structures;
- relationships within families;
- love and care;
- responsibilities within families;
- the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation;
- the Catholic understanding of marriage and family life.

The school recognises that pupils may come from a wide range of family backgrounds. All pupils and their families will be treated with dignity and respect.

7. Science and RSE

The National Curriculum for Science includes statutory content relating to humans, reproduction, growth, puberty and physical development.

The school will teach this content in accordance with the National Curriculum and in a manner consistent with the school's Catholic ethos.

Science teaching may include:

- identifying and naming parts of the human body;
- understanding growth and development;
- understanding reproduction;
- understanding that humans reproduce and have offspring;
- understanding puberty and changes during adolescence;
- understanding the importance of hygiene and healthy living.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from statutory Science curriculum content.

8. Catholic RSE Programme

The school will use an appropriate Catholic RSE programme which reflects the CES model framework and the teaching of the Catholic Church.

The school currently uses:

Life to the Full

The programme is supplemented and adapted where appropriate to reflect:

- the needs of St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School;
- the Diocese of East Anglia;
- the school's Catholic mission;
- the age and maturity of pupils;
- the needs of individual pupils;
- statutory DfE requirements;
- safeguarding considerations.

The CES recognises the importance of Catholic schools using resources which are faithful to Church teaching while meeting statutory requirements.

9. Teaching and Learning

RSE will be taught in an age-appropriate, sensitive and respectful manner.

Teaching will use a range of approaches, including:

- discussion;
- stories;
- scenarios;
- role play where appropriate;
- video and other approved resources;
- reflection;
- questioning;
- written work;
- group activities;
- individual reflection.

Teachers will create a safe environment in which pupils can ask questions and discuss issues appropriately.

Teachers will not be expected to answer questions which fall outside the planned curriculum or are inappropriate for the age or maturity of the pupils.

Where a question raises a safeguarding concern, this will be dealt with in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

10. Age Appropriateness

The content and language used will reflect the age, maturity and developmental stage of pupils.

The school recognises that pupils develop at different rates.

Teachers will therefore consider:

- age;
- developmental maturity;
- SEND;
- individual circumstances;
- previous knowledge;
- emotional readiness;

- cultural and family context.

The school may adapt the delivery of lessons where necessary while maintaining the intended curriculum content.

11. Teaching Groups

Most RSE teaching will take place within normal class groups.

Where appropriate, particularly when teaching more sensitive aspects of puberty, growing up or personal development, the school may use:

- smaller groups;
- single-gender groups;
- individual support;
- targeted teaching;
- additional adult support.

Any grouping decision will be made on educational and pastoral grounds and will not be used to exclude pupils from appropriate curriculum content.

12. SEND and Inclusion

The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils have appropriate access to RSE.

Teachers will adapt teaching and resources where necessary for pupils with:

- SEND;
- communication needs;
- learning difficulties;
- physical disabilities;
- sensory needs;
- emotional or social needs;
- other additional needs.

Additional repetition, visual support, simplified language, individual teaching or alternative resources may be used where appropriate.

The school will have regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The CES recognises that Catholic RSE should be sensitive to individual pupils and the range of circumstances represented within a school community.

13. Equality and Respect

RSE will promote respect for every person.

Pupils will be taught to:

- treat others with dignity;
- respect differences;
- avoid stereotypes;
- challenge prejudice;
- reject bullying and harassment;
- understand that people should not be treated unfairly because of protected characteristics.

Teaching will remain consistent with Catholic teaching and the school's Catholic ethos.

The school recognises that pupils may have different family circumstances, cultural backgrounds and experiences.

These differences will be acknowledged respectfully and sensitively.

14. Language and Terminology

Teachers will use accurate, age-appropriate and respectful language.

Where biological terms are taught, correct terminology will be used.

Staff should avoid language which is:

- shaming;
- humiliating;
- unnecessarily graphic;
- judgemental;
- stereotypical;
- inconsistent with the school's Catholic ethos.

15. Parents and Carers

The school recognises parents and carers as the primary educators of their children.

We will work in partnership with parents and carers by:

- publishing this policy;
- communicating the school's approach to RSE;
- providing information about curriculum content;
- providing opportunities to ask questions;
- signposting appropriate resources;
- listening to parental concerns;
- ensuring that the school and home provide complementary messages wherever possible.

Parents and carers will be given appropriate information about planned RSE content before it is taught where the school considers this appropriate.

The school will seek to maintain an open and constructive dialogue with families.

The CES places particular emphasis on the partnership between Catholic schools and parents in the delivery of RSE.

16. Right of Withdrawal

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from sex education delivered as part of RSE, other than content forming part of the statutory National Curriculum for Science.

There is no right to withdraw pupils from:

- Relationships Education;
- Health Education;
- statutory Science;
- Religious Education.

Parents wishing to withdraw their child from additional sex education should contact the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will discuss the request with the parent or carer and explain:

- the content concerned;
- the purpose of the teaching;
- the distinction between statutory and additional content;
- the school's Catholic approach.

Where a parent continues to request withdrawal after this discussion, the school will respect the parent's legal right.

The school will ensure that any pupil who is withdrawn is appropriately supervised and provided with suitable alternative educational activity.

17. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

RSE is taught within the school's wider safeguarding framework.

Teachers will establish clear boundaries around confidentiality.

Pupils will be told that:

We listen, but we cannot promise to keep a safeguarding concern secret.

If a pupil discloses information which suggests that they or another person may be at risk of harm, staff will:

- listen calmly;
- avoid leading questions;
- avoid investigating;
- reassure the pupil appropriately;
- record the concern accurately;
- report it immediately in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

This includes disclosures relating to:

- sexual abuse;
- exploitation;
- inappropriate sexual behaviour;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- grooming;
- online abuse;
- domestic abuse;
- neglect;
- other safeguarding concerns.

Staff must follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

18. Questions from Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to ask questions in a respectful environment.

Teachers will:

- answer questions within the planned curriculum where appropriate;
- use age-appropriate language;
- correct misconceptions;
- avoid unnecessarily detailed discussion;
- defer questions where further consideration is required;
- speak to parents or the Designated Safeguarding Lead where appropriate.

A pupil's question may indicate a safeguarding concern.

Staff will therefore use professional judgement and follow safeguarding procedures where necessary.

19. External Visitors and Agencies

The school may use appropriately qualified external professionals to support aspects of RSE.

Examples may include:

- school nursing services;
- health professionals;
- other suitably qualified professionals.

Before an external visitor delivers RSE, the school will ensure that:

- the content is appropriate;
- the visitor is suitably qualified or experienced;
- the material is consistent with Catholic teaching;
- safeguarding requirements are met;
- the visitor understands this policy;
- the school retains responsibility for the content delivered.

External visitors will not replace the professional responsibility of teachers or the school's leadership.

20. Staff Training

Staff delivering RSE will receive appropriate support and professional development.

Training may include:

- Catholic RSE;
- curriculum content;
- safeguarding;
- managing sensitive questions;
- puberty and human development;
- inclusion and SEND;
- equality;
- use of approved resources;
- responding to disclosures.

The Headteacher, RE Leader and PSHE/RSE Leader will ensure that staff have access to appropriate guidance and resources.

21. Assessment

RSE will be assessed as appropriate to the nature of the subject.

Assessment will consider:

Knowledge and understanding

What pupils know and understand.

Personal and social skills

How pupils apply learning in relationships and personal situations.

Attitudes and values

How pupils reflect on and demonstrate respect, responsibility, dignity and positive relationships.

Assessment approaches may include:

- teacher assessment;
- questioning;
- pupil discussion;
- pupil self-assessment;
- written work;
- practical activities;
- reflection;
- quizzes or retrieval activities.

Assessment will not seek to assess pupils' personal beliefs, family circumstances or private experiences.

22. Monitoring

The RE/RSE or PSHE Leader will monitor the quality and consistency of RSE provision.

Monitoring may include:

- curriculum planning review;
- lesson visits;
- work scrutiny;
- pupil voice;
- staff feedback;
- parental feedback;
- review of resources;
- assessment information.

The Headteacher will monitor the implementation of this policy.

A designated governor may monitor RSE annually through:

- discussion with school leaders;
- staff feedback;
- pupil voice;
- review of curriculum documentation;
- parental feedback where appropriate.

Findings and recommendations will be reported to the Governing Body.

23. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and relevant subject leaders, with approval from the Governing Body.

The review will consider:

- changes to statutory guidance;
- changes to CES guidance;
- Diocese of East Anglia guidance;
- pupil needs;
- parental feedback;
- staff feedback;
- safeguarding developments;
- curriculum developments;
- monitoring and evaluation.

Where significant changes are proposed, the school will consult with parents and the Governing Body as appropriate.

24. Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Relationships, Health and PSHE curriculum documentation;
- Religious Education Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;

- Equality Policy;
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Science curriculum;
- Catholic Education Service RSE guidance;
- Diocese of East Anglia RSE guidance.

25. Curriculum Overview

The school's detailed RSE curriculum map will identify the content taught in each year group.

The curriculum will build progressively from:

Early Years

- understanding family and people who care for us;
- friendships;
- kindness;
- recognising and expressing feelings;
- understanding personal space;
- respecting bodies;
- hygiene;
- identifying trusted adults.

Key Stage 1

- family and friendship;
- positive relationships;
- respect;
- feelings and emotions;
- personal boundaries;
- keeping safe;
- appropriate and inappropriate touch;
- basic body awareness;
- hygiene;
- growing and changing.

Lower Key Stage 2

- developing friendships;
- resolving conflict;
- respectful communication;
- personal responsibility;
- online relationships and safety;
- body changes;
- puberty preparation;
- hygiene;
- emotional wellbeing;
- seeking help.

Upper Key Stage 2

- mature friendships and relationships;
- responsibility and respect;

- puberty and physical changes;
- menstruation;
- emotional changes;
- reproduction;
- conception and birth at an age-appropriate level;
- personal boundaries;
- consent and respect;
- online safety and harmful content;
- recognising unhealthy relationships;
- seeking help;
- preparation for secondary school and adolescence.

The precise content and sequence will be set out in the school's curriculum programme and adapted where necessary to meet the needs of pupils.