



**St Edward's
School**

Unity - Achievement - Faith

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

**Reviewed and Approved by Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes
Committee**

On: 4th June 2026

Next formal consultation and review date: Summer 2027

SLT are responsible for the oversight of this policy's implementation

Mission Statement MAY WE BE ONE

In purpose – educating for life in all its fullness

In faith – encountering God who lives among us, calling us to unity

In dignity – nurturing confidence and maturity

In community – striving together for justice, love and peace

We live in a world in which people can be treated as objects for exploitation. This runs contrary to the Christian vision of a world where each individual is respected as a child of God. Individuality doesn't mean the permission to do as we please. It means that we honour the dignity of all people, regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation or creed. Our programme of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) will be delivered in a climate of mutual respect, so that we can encounter God in one another, who calls us to unity. As we help students to reflect on their dignity, and that of others, we seek to nurture their growth in confidence and maturity, as they become aware of their potential to be life giving, nurturing parents in the future.

At the heart of RSE within the school will be the desire for all students to live life in its fullness by understanding the purpose that God has called us to. In terms of RSE this will include being aware of issues surrounding sexual relationships but also the crucial role of marriage, family life and stable relationships. In this way students will be helped to see the fullness of life and relationships that God intended for us. Through this we will also seek to build the confidence and maturity of the students, by encouraging them to hold relationships based on mutual respect, dignity and responsibility, as children of God, enlightened by our Christian faith.

Definition

1. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage, family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health. RSE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values. It is important that RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Statutory Requirements

2. As a maintained secondary school we must provide RSE to all pupils as per the Children and Social work Act 2017.

2.1 In teaching RSE, we must have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996. as such, this policy is designed in accordance with the statutory guidance for RSE published 2025 for implementation in 2026.

2.2 We must also have regard to our legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010

- The Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities
- DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education' document (September 2025)

Context

3. At St Edward's we wish to express a very positive attitude towards relationships and human sexuality. We affirm the intrinsic value of every person made in the image of God and that each one of us is placed in community for relationship with others. We further affirm that our sexuality is a gift of God to be celebrated and rightly expressed, treating ourselves and others with dignity and respect. These affirmations and this RSE Policy are set in this context, and flow out of the Christian Faith and its ethos and values that we share as Roman Catholics, Anglicans and as members of other Christian traditions. At the same time we are aware that we live within the context of a complex and fast-changing society where convictions and practices have changed enormously. We acknowledge that our policy is set in the context of each young person's home/personal circumstances and needs to be applied with sensitivity and respect,

Roman Catholic and Church of England Views

4. Within the context of our joint church school we take into account perspectives of both churches.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has stated "The Church has always recognised that it is the privilege and responsibility of the family to inform and educate their children in all matters pertaining to human growth and development, particularly in the sensitive area of sexual development". It calls for schools to assist by collaborating with the family and "to consider their role in such education and to review their programmes so that our children and young people are given positive guidance and a true appreciation of all their human gifts" (Laying the Foundations for Education in Personal Relationships, Bishops' Conference of England & Wales, Low Week Statement, 1987).

The Church of England states that relationships and sex education "should ensure that children are able to cherish themselves and others as unique and wonderfully made, keep themselves safe and able to form healthy relationships where they respect and afford dignity to others" (The Church of England Education Office, November 2019).

Aims

5. At St Edward's we are committed to the education of the whole child and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. The aims of RSE at our school are to:
- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
 - Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
 - Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
 - Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
 - Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

- Provide our students with an understanding of the nature and importance of the unique and whole person “created male and female in the image of God”, respecting life as a gift from God.
- Teach RSE with the belief in the absolute worth of human beings and the unconditional, infinite love of God.
- Support the life-long spiritual, personal, moral, and social development of all our students.
- Ensure that our students have the ability to accept their own and others’ sexuality in positive ways without fear of being stigmatised.
- Encourage relationships based on mutual respect, dignity and responsibility free from any abuse, as children of God, enlightened by our Christian faith.

Overall Objectives

6. Within the context of our shared Christian Faith, the objectives to enable students to:

- Understand the physical and emotional development that occurs during adolescence and beyond;
- Value and build loving relationships;
- Understand the importance of mutual responsibility, trust and respect within these relationships
- See Christian marriage as the loving, life-long union between a woman and a man, within which sex is an integral expression of this deep love;
- Value family life and the responsibilities of parenthood;
- Learn the significance of marriage and families as key building blocks of community and society;
- Increase awareness of the need for dignity and respect of oneself and of others;
- Ensure awareness of other views regarding marriage and family life;
- Be taught to have respect for their own and other people’s bodies; and to respect the choice of abstinence;
- Know the meaning of the virtue of chastity and to understand that it is to be respected and valued;
- Understand the values underlying sexual behaviour, enabling students to make informed and responsible decisions;
- Understand when sex is being used to cause harm in any way to another person, including subjugation or to demean or control;
- Develop an awareness and understanding of spiritual, physical and emotional issues relating to sexual activity;
 - Be made aware of the way in which peer pressure, advertising and all media influence their views about relationships, sex and the choice of abstinence and conceptions of masculinity and femininity;
- Know and understand how British law applies to sexual relationships including consent.
- Recognise, respect and value their own ~~sexual identity~~ sexuality and gender and that of others.
- Develop healthy attitudes recognising the harms of sexism, misogyny and prejudicial behaviour towards others based on protected characteristics.

Policy Development

7. This policy has been developed in consultation with relevant staff, governors, students and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:
 1. Review – The named member of SLT pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance .
 2. Proposal – The proposed RSE policy was submitted to the rest of the SLT, the PSHE Coordinator and relevant Governing body.
 3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy.
 4. Student consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE
 5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with the full governing body and ratified.

Curriculum

8. RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE). There may be some occasions where some elements of the curriculum are delivered within collective worship or in tutor times.

8.1 Students can receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by an accredited professional.

- 8.2 RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

- 8.3 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, LGBTQ+ 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).

- 8.4 The curriculum is informed by guidance from the Department of Education regarding what should be taught in RSE. This guidance is contained in Appendix 1.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Governing Body

9. The governing body will approve the RSE policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The Headteacher

- 9.1 The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from components of RSE.
- 9.2 Through the SLT, the headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the delivery of RSE is co-ordinated across the relevant departments and that effective training has been given to staff to support them in their delivery of it.

Staff

- 9.3 Staff are responsible for:
 - Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
 - Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
 - Monitoring progress
 - Responding to the needs of individual students

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE -will be supported

Students

- 9.4 Students are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.
- 9.5 There may be on occasion a student who, because of their additional need, will need support from the SEND department to access the learning in an alternative setting.

Parents and Carers

9.6 We recognise that parents and carers are the primary educators of their children. Our role is to work alongside parents and carers in providing this education in relationships and sex within a Christian context. We will inform parents and carers about the RSE programme and be prepared to answer any questions they might have about it and recognise their right to access all relevant curriculum resources upon request.

Parent's right to withdraw

10. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

10.1 Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing to the PSHE Coordinator who will discuss with the Headteacher and communicate a response

10.2 A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from relationship and sex education.

Confidentiality and safeguarding children procedures

11. Students need to feel safe and secure in the environment where RSE takes place. Effective RSE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships.

12. Teachers will conduct RSE lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a student under the age of 16 makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved, in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as a matter of safeguarding. (This may be a matter for careful discernment if the disclosure reveals peer activity). Teachers will respond in a similar way if any student, including all sixth formers, indicates that he/she may have been the victim of abuse or grooming. Additionally, if a student makes comments about sexuality, gender identity, or masculinity that are disrespectful or raise concerns, teachers will respond in accordance with the school's safeguarding and behaviour policy.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review of Policy

13. In line with Government statutory requirements the school must have an up to date policy published on the school website.

13.1 This policy will be considered annually, and formally reviewed every three years by the PSHE Coordinator and the member of SLT with responsibility for RSE. The formal review will also be conducted in consultation with the Governors, Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team, and will follow the procedure outlined in the "Policy Development" section of this policy.

13.2 The PDBA Committee of the governing body monitors the RSE policy. This committee reports its findings and recommendations to the full governing body, as necessary, if the policy needs modification or revision.

13.3 The PSHE co-ordinator will monitor the various dimensions of the programme. The programme will be evaluated through student, parent and teacher voice. The results of this evaluation will be shared with all 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.

Appendix 1: By the end of secondary school students should know

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Families	• That there are many kinds of healthy, stable and committed relationships; to have equal opportunity to learn about all forms of relationships, involving those of all sexualities and identities • How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children • What marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony • Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into • The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships • The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting • How to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed
Respectful relationships, including friendships	• The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice) • That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help • That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control • What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable • The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Online and media	• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online • About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online • Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them • What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online • The impact of viewing harmful content • That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners • That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail • The role AI plays in the creation of, and manipulation of, sexualised imagery and how to safeguard against these prospective harms • How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online
Being safe	• The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships • How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online) • The links between sexism, misogyny and violence against women and girls

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	• How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship • That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing • The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women • That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others • That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex • The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available • The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage • That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help) • How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing • About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment • How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour • How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

Appendix 2: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

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

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