

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY POLICY

FEBRUARY 2025

SIGNED *Esther Bonnington.*

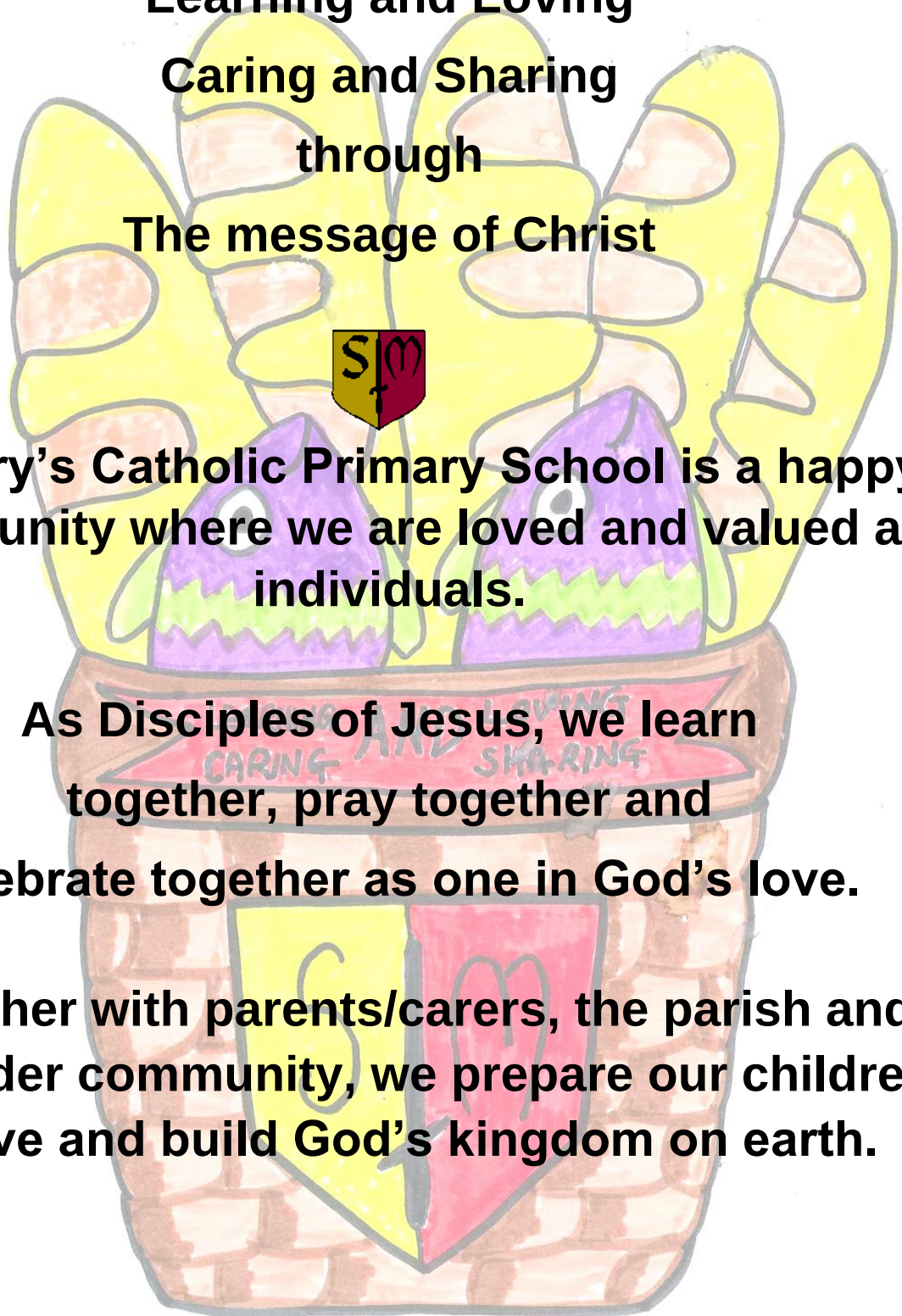
**Learning and Loving
Caring and Sharing
through
The message of Christ**



**St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a happy
community where we are loved and valued as
individuals.**

**As Disciples of Jesus, we learn
together, pray together and
celebrate together as one in God's love.**

**Together with parents/carers, the parish and
the wider community, we prepare our children
to live and build God's kingdom on earth.**

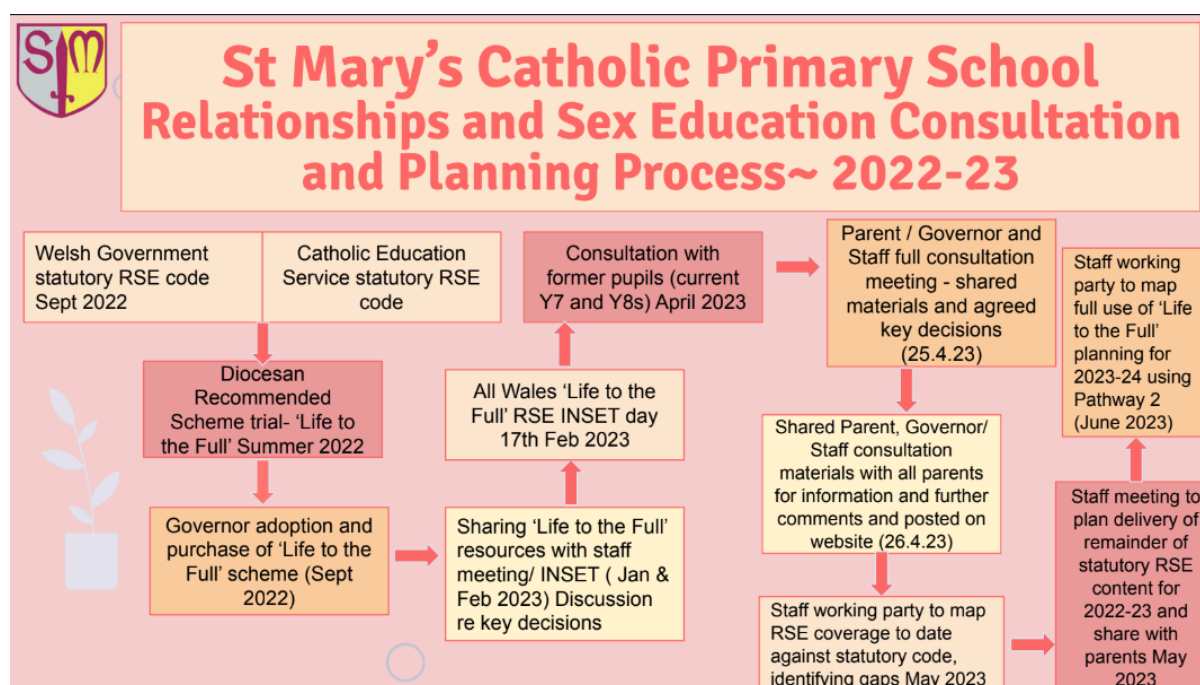


In this policy, the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, will set out our intentions for delivery of relationships and sexuality education (RSE) at St Mary's Catholic Primary School.

We will also set out our rationale for and approach to relationships and sex education in the school.

Implementation and Review of Policy

This policy was implemented following full consultation with all stakeholders during the school year 2022-23, as illustrated in the consultation flowchart below.



As a statutory policy, the RSE policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Headteacher and Mission and Purpose governor SAC. The next review date is Spring 2026.

Dissemination

The RSE policy is shared with all members of the Governing Body via the shared HWB drive and as part of the Mission and Purpose SAC minutes. The policy is also shared with all members of staff and is available for parents through the school's prospectus and via the school website. Details of the content of the RSE curriculum is shared with parents via Seesaw each half term and is also published on the school's website.

Defining Relationships and Sexuality Education

In today's digital age, and the dangers associated with it, the provision of high quality Catholic RSE is an essential part of our responsibility to keep children safe.

The Welsh Government states,

' R.S.E. has a positive and empowering role in learners' education and plays a vital role in supporting them to realise the four purposes as part of a whole school approach. Helping learners to form and maintain a range of relationships, all based on mutual trust and respect, is the foundation of RSE. These relationships are critical to the development of emotional well-being, resilience and empathy. An understanding of sexuality with an emphasis on rights, health, equality and equity empowers learners to understand themselves, take responsibility for their own decisions and behaviours, and form relationships that are fully inclusive, reflecting diversity and promoting respect.' ¹

[1] Curriculum for Wales- Summary of legislation, Welsh Government, Hwb Cymru, <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/summary-of-legislation>

Statutory Curriculum Requirements

Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) is a statutory requirement in the Curriculum for Wales framework and is mandatory for all learners from ages 3 to 16 and a curriculum must accord with the RSE Code.

² <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/summary-of-legislation>

The RSE Code sets out each strand of teaching and learning in three broad developmental phases as follows:

Phase 1: from age 3

Phase 2: from age 7

Phase 3: from age 113

The mandatory content of the RSE Code ² is set within the context of **broad and interlinked learning strands, namely:**

- **relationships and identity**
- **sexual health and well-being**
- **empowerment, safety and respect.**

The Act requires that the RSE that schools provide must be developmentally appropriate for learners. This means schools and settings must take account of a range of factors including the learner's age; knowledge and maturity; any additional learning needs and anticipating their physiological and emotional development.

RSE must be developmentally appropriate for each learner, meaning that learners' needs of similar ages may differ. However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

Rationale

'I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL' (Jn.10.10)

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

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

Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales, RSE will be firmly embedded in the PSE framework (REFER TO THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING AOLE) as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils. It is centred on Christ's vision of being human as good news and will be positive and prudent, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.

RSE is mainly taught as a separate subject at St Mary's, however, teachers carefully interweave appropriate knowledge, skills and learning experiences as part of a planned cross-curricular teaching approach,

and where possible, explicit links are made with the Religious Education Values and Ethics curriculum.

All RSE provided at St Mary's 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, and support will be provided to help pupils deal with different sets of values.

Values and Virtues

Our programme enshrines Catholic values relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life. It also promotes those virtues which are essential in responding to God's call to love others 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 RSE and the Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement, 'Learning and Loving, Caring and Sharing, through the Message of Christ' commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE 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"[1] which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

Gravissimum Educationis 1

Objectives

To develop the following attitudes and virtues:

- reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility;
- respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others;
- joy in the goodness of the created world and their own bodily natures;

- responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others;
- recognising and valuing their own sexual identity and that of others; · celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love;
- recognising the importance of marriage and family life;
- fidelity in relationships.

To develop the following personal and social skills:

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

To know and understand:

- the Church's teaching on relationships and the nature and meaning of sexual love;

- the Church's teaching on marriage and the importance of marriage and family life;
- the centrality and importance of virtue in guiding human living and loving;
- the physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty;
- the facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation

Outcomes

Inclusion and Differentiated Learning

At St Mary's, we ensure that the provision of R.S.E. is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect of pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, faith or culture and is taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination.

Lessons will also help children to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber-bullying), use of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help.

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

Broad Content of RSE

Three aspects of RSE

- attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills will be provided in three interrelated ways: the whole school / ethos dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific relationships and sex curriculum.

Programme and Resources

At St Mary's we use the Diocesan approved RSE programme called 'Life to the Full', which is also used by all Catholic Primary Schools in the Wrexham Diocese. Further information about the programme is available on the school website, on the Ten Ten website and is provided to parents about specific content to be delivered each half term.

Teaching and Learning

Our inclusive approach at St Mary's encompasses an entitlement to high-quality learning experiences for every pupil in the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

This includes the delivery of high- quality and age appropriate Relationships and Sex Education and links to the following articles:-

Article 3-All adults must do what's best for me

Article 6- Right to grow up and live a healthy life

Article 17- Right to get information that is important to my well-being

Article 19-Right to being protected from being hurt and mistreated in body and mind

Article 34-Right to be free from abuse

Teachers will employ a range of strategies to effectively deliver the teaching and learning of RSE.

Some examples of possible strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques

- discussion
- reflection
- experiential / active learning
 - brainstorming
- film & video
- group work
- role-play

Assessment

The principles of progression across the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience offer guidance to progression in R.S.E.

Teachers assess children's knowledge and understanding via informal discussion work, questioning and formative assessment for learning strategies.

Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents and other carers 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.

The school will therefore support parents and carers by providing them with information about the content of the programme and how this will be delivered in school. This will be provided via the website, via email or class Seesaw posts. Either prior to or following RSE teaching sessions, when the more sensitive aspects of RSE are to be delivered, parents/carers will be informed so that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning.

Parents will continue to be consulted at every stage of the development of the RSE programme, as well as during the process of monitoring, review and evaluation. As part of any parents' consultation/ information meetings, parents will be asked to share their feedback and any questions or concerns about the programme. This information will be considered when updating the policy and to inform future curriculum planning.

Right to Withdraw

Since the roll out of the Curriculum for Wales from September 2022, parents no longer have the right to withdraw their children from RSE.

[Link to WG Statutory RSE Code](#)

Balanced Curriculum

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, at St Mary's we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues.

Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE.

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.

Responsibility for Teaching the Programme

Responsibility for the delivery of 'Life to the Full' and all other aspects of RSE in St Mary's lies with class teachers; this will normally include science and technology, religious education, values and ethics, health and well-being, RSE and PSHE). However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE programme.

All members of staff 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.

External Visitors

Where appropriate, and from time to time, we may seek help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to support the delivery of aspects of RSE in St Mary's. 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 'Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools'.

Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools, CES, Feb. 2011

Health professionals should follow the school's policies, minimising the potential for disclosures or inappropriate comments using negotiated ground rules and distancing techniques as other teachers would. They will ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice.

Other Roles and Responsibilities

Our current RSE Governor is: Sally Jones

Governors will:-

- Draw up the RSE policy, in consultation with parents and teachers;
- Ensure that the policy is available to parents;
- Ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g., ALN, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs;
- Ensure that parents know about the removal of the right to withdraw their children from RSE
- 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 the mandatory content of the RSE code

Head teacher

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 Authority, also appropriate agencies.

RSE Subject Leaders

Our current RSE subject leaders are Mrs Wilkinson and Mrs Acton who have general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the

implementation of this policy, and the provision of staff training and development.

All Staff

RSE 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.

Teachers will be expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school.

Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSE.

All staff have been included in the development of this policy and all staff should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them.

Relationship to other policies and the wider curriculum.

This RSE policy is to be delivered as part of a comprehensive cross-curricular approach and links closely with the other school policy documents (for example, Good Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy and the school's Safeguarding Policy) Pupils any additional needs will receive appropriately differentiated support in order to enable them to achieve mature knowledge, understanding and skills, at an age/ stage appropriate level. Teaching methods will be adapted to meet the varying needs of all pupils.

Children's Questions

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. They want to ensure that pupils can ask questions freely, be confident that their questions will be answered, and be sure that they will be free from bullying or harassment from other children and young people.

Controversial or Sensitive issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE. These may be matters of maturity, of personal involvement or experience of children, of disagreement with the official teaching of the Church, of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious or harmful activity.

The governors believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSE programme, with a safe, trusted and familiar adult.

The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. All children in every class will, as such, determine an expected code of conduct prior to beginning the programme. This sets out the rules and agreed terms of conduct relevant to their age and stage.

Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, e.g., where a child or young person's questions hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature.

Supporting Children and Young People who are at Risk

Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place. Effective RSE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue. Teachers will need to be aware of the needs of their pupils and not let any fears and worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects that a child or young person is a victim of or is at risk of abuse, they are required to follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

Confidentiality and Advice

All governors, all teachers, all support staff, all parents and all pupils must be made aware of this policy, particularly as it relates to issues of advice and confidentiality.

All lessons, especially those in the RSE programme, will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and sex, developing appropriate personal and social skills and becoming appreciative of the values and attitudes which underpin the Christian understanding of what it means to be fully human. Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in the programme. Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties, in line with the school's pastoral procedures. Teachers should explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters where their safety and wellbeing could be at risk. Teachers will explain that in such circumstances they

would have to inform others, e.g., parents, head teacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The headteacher and the RE Coordinator will monitor and evaluate the provision of RSE at regular intervals and make any necessary amendments / updates.