

NOTRE DAME PREP SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

NOTRE
DAME
SCHOOL



1. Defining Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)

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”. It is about the development of the pupil’s knowledge and understanding of them 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. The depth and breadth of views is clear, and there are understandable and legitimate areas of contention.

Our guiding principles have been that all of the compulsory subject content must be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. It must be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils and parents while always with the aim of providing pupils with the knowledge they need of the law.

In the Prep school the focus is on “teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults.” This includes the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

2. Statutory Curriculum Requirements

We follow the Department for Education's statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Guidance (2025), which becomes mandatory from September 2026. Our curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure that pupils receive accurate, age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate learning that reflects current safeguarding, health and wellbeing needs.

3. Rationale

‘I have come that you might have life and have it to the full’ (John 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.

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 and as advocated by the DfE (and the Welsh Assembly Government) RSE will be firmly embedded in the PSHEE framework 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.

RSHE forms an essential part of our safeguarding provision. Through age-appropriate learning, pupils develop the knowledge, vocabulary and skills needed to recognise unsafe situations, understand personal boundaries, identify trusted adults, seek support when needed and make safe choices in both offline and online environments. The curriculum supports pupils in developing resilience, critical thinking and the confidence to protect their physical and emotional wellbeing.

All RSE will be in accordance with the Church’s moral teaching underpinned by the Company of Mary Our Lady Educational Project. It will emphasise the central importance of all pupils having a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from. It will also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

4. 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 the God's call to love others with a proper respect for their dignity and the dignity of the human body.

5. Aim of RSE and our Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural and 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" which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity. The Catholic vision of education and the human person will always be explored.

6. Inclusion and Differentiated Learning

We will ensure RSE 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. 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.

In accordance with statutory guidance, teaching will be inclusive and accessible to all learners, including pupils with SEND. Appropriate adaptations will be made so that all pupils can access and engage with learning. Teaching will reflect the diversity of families and the wider community whilst remaining consistent with the Catholic character of the school.

7. Equality

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.

8. Broad Content of RSE

Our Relationships and Sex Education programme is delivered through Ten Ten's Life to the Full programme and is complemented by Coram Life Education's SCARF resources within our wider PSHE curriculum. Together these programmes support pupils' spiritual, moral, emotional, social and physical development and meet statutory RSHE requirements.

In addition to the established themes of relationships, health and safety, pupils will learn about:

- online safety and digital wellbeing;
- online financial harms, including scams, gaming monetisation and age restrictions;
- privacy, consent and personal data online;
- the correct scientific names for body parts, including genitalia;
- personal safety, including water, road, rail and fire safety;
- change and loss, including bereavement and grief;
- communicating effectively;
- recognising and expressing personal needs, feelings and boundaries;
- developing resilience and managing difficult emotions such as disappointment, loneliness and frustration;
- strategies for resisting pressure online and seeking support when needed.

Content is carefully sequenced and adapted to the age, maturity and needs of pupils.

8a. Online Safety and Digital Wellbeing

Recognising the increasing influence of digital technology on children's lives, online safety is a central component of our curriculum. Pupils are taught how to critically evaluate online information, understand privacy settings, recognise manipulation and online risks, protect personal information, seek help when concerned, and develop positive and respectful online relationships.

9. Teaching strategies

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- Online resources
- group work
- role-play
- values clarification

In the Prep school, the RSE curriculum is taught by class teachers and the Pastoral Director in Years 5 and 6.

10. 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 workshops to help parents/carers to find out more. Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning. Parents/carers will be able to view the resources used by the school in the RSE programme.

This policy is ratified by the Governors and Parents were consulted on all aspects of the RSE curriculum. We will continue to consult with parents on any significant changes made to this curriculum.

Parents continue to have the right to withdraw their children from Sex Education except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the Head teacher. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning. We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed. Please refer to appendix 1 (DfE guidance Page 17) for further details on the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw). Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from the relationships education which happens in every year group in an age-appropriate manner. The RSE curriculum is entwined within our PSHE scheme, and specific topics are detailed within the PSHE policy. The PSHE/RSE curriculum is also shared with parents at the beginning of the year on our Curriculum Maps.

Classroom materials used for RSE teaching will be shared with parents on request, including where an outside provider is used to deliver content. Parents may find it useful to view this material with a staff member so that explanations and context can be given alongside the material, but this is not a requirement of viewing the material. The school will always preview any material from outside providers before it is used in school.

The school is committed to transparent communication with parents and carers regarding RSHE. Curriculum content and resources will be made available to parents, and consultation will take place when significant curriculum or policy changes are proposed. Parental feedback will be considered as part of the school's ongoing review process.

11. 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 RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. The School has the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work and of teaching in RSE as for other curriculum areas.

Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE (in the Senior school only, issues 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.

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lays with Rebecca Coppins in the Prep school, supported by the relevant subject leaders for Science, Religious Education, PE, RSE and PSHE. However, in line with our school ethos all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE programme. They will be role models for our 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.

Teaching will promote positive, healthy and respectful relationships and avoid fear-based approaches. Learning will support pupils to become kind, caring individuals who respect themselves and others, understand personal boundaries and know how to seek help when needed.

12. External Visitors

Our school will sometimes call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSE. 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 so any visitor must adhere to our code of practice and follow our Visiting Speakers policy.

13. Confidentiality and Advice

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 (Rebecca Golding).

All governors, teachers, support staff, parents and pupils will 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 care policy. 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., DSL, parents, Head teacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

14. Monitoring and Evaluation

The RSE Co-ordinator (Rebecca Coppins) will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils work at regular intervals as well as assessing the quality of teaching. Pupils who need extra support of intervention will be

identified. The programme will be evaluated biannually by means of questionnaires/response sheets/needs assessment given to pupils, and/or by discussion with pupils, staff and parents.

The curriculum will be reviewed annually against the statutory RSHE guidance and in response to safeguarding developments, pupil voice, parental feedback and emerging local or national issues.

Reviews:

May 2021 – drafted by Rebecca Golding

April 2023

December 2023- Rebecca Golding

December 2025 – Rebecca Coppins

September 2026 – Rebecca Coppins

15. References

- DfE, Sex and relationship education guidance, September 2025
- Guidance under section 80A of the Education Act 2002
- Guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales and as advocated by the DfE (and the Welsh Assembly Government).
- Department for Education, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance (2025)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition)
- Catholic Education Service guidance
- Ten Ten Resources: Life to the Full
- Coram Life Education SCARF Programme
- Diocese of Arundel & Brighton guidance
- Equality Act 2010