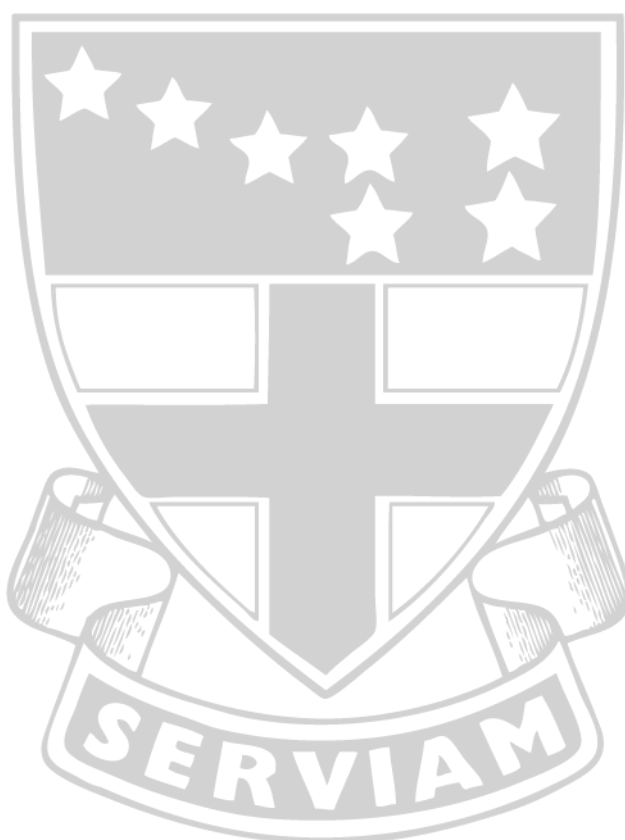


RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY



Date of Review: March 2025

Date of Next Review: March 2027

RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY

This policy recognises the national guidance of May 2024

SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

St Angela's School is part of the Ursuline tradition, which has as its hallmark the pursuit of the highest standards possible in education.

Through our curriculum and community life, we seek to meet the needs of the whole person and to enable all to achieve their full potential. We do this in a Catholic Christian community in which all members are equally valued. We share with St Angela a commitment to the service of young people, which will empower them to play their full part in society.

In light of this we aim to;

- recognise and respond sensitively to the talents and needs of every student and provide the most appropriate means of developing their full potential;
- ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all;
- welcome, value and respect all who come to the school;
- provide opportunities for experiencing the fullness of Catholic life while developing a spirit of tolerance, understanding and respect for other cultures, traditions and faiths;
- build a community based on justice and a sense of personal responsibility while acknowledging the power of healing, reconciliation and forgiveness;
- promote dialogue and co-operation with the wider community.

Consultation that took place in creating this policy;

- student focus groups / school council
- parental consultation
- consultation with wider school staff community
- consultation with school governors

Implementation, Dissemination and Review of Policy

The policy will be given to all members of the Governing Body, and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the document will be available to all parents through the school's website and a copy is available in the school office.

DEFINING RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION

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".

In secondary schools we build on the foundations taught in primary school with the intention that RSHE should "give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex

(and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help students understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.”

(Relationships Education, Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers)

STATUTORY CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

We are legally required to teach the statutory parts of the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance. However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSHE within our curriculum 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, sex and health 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 RSHE 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 loving relationships 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. RSHE, 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) RSHE will be firmly embedded in the PSHE framework as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of students. 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.

All RSHE 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 students have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from. It will also prepare students for life in modern Britain.

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 RSHE AND THE 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 RSHE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, our school aims to empower the students in our care, raising self-esteem and helping them to grow in knowledge and understanding. We 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, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

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;
- how to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception;
- how to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

OUTCOMES

INCLUSION AND ADAPTIVE LEARNING

We will ensure RSHE is sensitive to the different needs of individual students in respect to students' 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 students to discrimination. Lessons will help students to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, 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 has responsibility for ensuring the school complies with relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against students because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). The school will make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage and be mindful of the SEND Code of Practice when planning and teaching the curriculum.

BROAD CONTENT OF RSHE

Three aspects of RSHE - 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. Statutory guidance states that by the end of their time at secondary school, students should have continued to develop their knowledge on topics specified for primary school and in addition should have covered the following content:

Families

Students should know:

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships.

- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- what marriage is, including their legal status – for example, 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), how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed

Respectful relationships, including friendships

Students should know:

- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships, in all contexts including online, such as:
- 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 (for example, 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

Online and media

Students should know:

- 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, for example 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
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online

Being safe

Students should know:

- 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

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Students should know:

- 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, for example 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 and menopause
- 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 and 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

PROGRAMME / RESOURCES

The programme will be delivered predominantly in our whole school Rise Up Days using a range of resources and teaching strategies which include, but are not limited to:

- establishing ground rules
- group discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- brainstorming
- film and media resources
- group work
- role-play
- guest speakers and visiting theatre groups
- visiting health professionals

ASSESSMENT

Assessing learning in RSHE is done via peer and self assessment with self elevation completed at the end of each Rise Up Day. Students can self assess their attitudes and skills as the content is introspective. Throughout lessons teachers assess facts through in class assessment methods i.e. questioning. It is important to note that students will be assessed according to their own starting point, not the requirements of an exam syllabus.

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. The full scheme of work for all Key Stages are available on the school website and annually updated. Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSHE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning.

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 Headteacher. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning, within 10 working days of the request.

We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.

Please refer to the DfE guidance and see below for changes to the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw).

From the academic year 2020/21, parents had the right to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSHE, unless the school feels there are exceptional circumstances. Parents have the right to withdraw their child until three terms before they turn 16; after that it is the child's decision.

If a student is withdrawn, it is the school's responsibility to ensure they receive appropriate, purposeful education during the withdrawal period. Parents cannot withdraw their child from the relationships education in RSHE or health education.

BALANCED CURRICULUM

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that students are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSHE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues.

Students will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSHE (in secondary schools/academies 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 students 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 specific relationships, sex and health education programme lies with form tutors, overseen by the Heads of Year, and SLT. However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSHE programme. They will be role models for students of good, healthy, wholesome relationships as between staff, other adults and students. They will also be contributing to the development of students' personal and social skills.

External Visitors

Our school will often call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSHE. Such visits will always complement the current programme of 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 protocol for visitors to St Angela's Ursuline School. Material delivered by external visitors are screened by SLT to ensure that the information adheres to the school's overall RSHE programme.

We have long standing relationships with health professionals visiting St Angela's Ursuline; as a consequence they are briefed on our 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 REGARDING RSHE

Governors

- draw up the RSHE 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, eg, SEN, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs;
- ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children;
- 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 relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSHE within PSHE.

SLT

The HeadTeacher 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 Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

The Deputy Headteacher with other members of SLT have a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to RSHE and the provision of in-service training.

All Staff

RSHE requires a whole school approach. 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 students. Teachers will be expected to teach RSHE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos and should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

This RSHE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHE framework. It includes guidelines about student safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents (for example, Anti-Bullying policy, Child Protection Policy, SEND Policy).

Students with particular difficulties whether of a physical or intellectual nature will receive appropriately differentiated support in order to enable them to achieve mature knowledge, understanding and skills. Teaching methods will be adapted to meet the varying needs of this group of students.

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSHE can take place. They want to ensure that students 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.

SENSITIVE ISSUES

There may be sensitive issues in the field of RSHE. The governors believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSHE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and students, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time. The school will consider what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting, as teachers may require support and training in answering questions that are better not dealt with in front of a whole class. Any concerns will be immediately directed to the School Designated Safeguarding team.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE AT RISK

Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSHE takes place. Effective RSHE 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 students 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 or another member of the child protection team

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ADVICE

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

All lessons will have the best interests of students at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding, 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.

Students will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in the programme. Teachers / pastoral support staff will always help students facing personal difficulties, in line with the school's pastoral care policy. Teachers should explain to students 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, eg, parents, HeadTeacher, DSL but that the students would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

SLT will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work, lesson observations and samples of students' work at regular intervals. The programme will be evaluated by means of evaluation sheets, and / or by discussion with students, staff and parents. Learning walks and book looks will be conducted by SLT to quality assure the intent and implementation of the programme. The results of all forms of evaluation will inform future RSHE curriculum planning, suggested teaching strategies and resources. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.