RELATIONSHIPS, SEX, HEALTH & ECONOMIC EDUCATION (RSHE) POLICY

St Peter's Catholic Voluntary Academy

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Approved by:		**Date:**	
Last reviewed on:	…June 2026		
Next review due by:	…June 2028		

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1 The School's Mission Statement and Aims & Objectives

- *The school's Mission Statement refers to how '**we celebrate the joy of knowing God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit in all that we do, learning together, growing as individuals and as a loving community.**' Our mission statement is not just a statement but a way of living at St Peter's Voluntary Catholic Academy – in all that we celebrate God.*
- *Our mission statement will help to form the very core of our RSHE programme of study by placing God, and the values and teachings of the Catholic church, at the forefront*
- As well as ensuring that we meet statutory guidelines for an RSHE programme, we will ensure God's word and love informs all that we do, to enable our children to become happy, healthy, confident, empathetic citizens able to love others as God created us to do

"Let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." – John 4: 7-8

Commented [SW1]: May need tweaking after work on new Mission Statement is undertaken

2 How the Policy Was Formed

- The policy was formed in response to the updated DfE guidance on the statutory delivery of all schools to provide an RSHE programme of study for all pupils from 1st September 2026
- The intentions of this policy are to explicitly set out the aims, objectives and protocols for our RSHE programme at St Peter's Catholic Voluntary Academy.

Implementation & Review of the Policy

Implementation of the policy will take place after consultation with the Teachers, Support Staff, Parents and Governors in the Advent term 2026. This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Head teacher, RSHE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and staff.

3 Dissemination

The policy will be made available 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. Details of the content of the RSHE curriculum will also be published on the school's website.

4 Rationale & Definition of RSHE

DEFINING RELATIONSHIP, SEX & HEALTH EDUCATION

The DfE guidance states that "children and young people need knowledge and skills that will enable them to make informed and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships". High quality RSE does this by promoting their "moral, social, mental and physical development" and

cultivating “positive characteristic including resilience, self-worth, self-respect, honesty, integrity, courage, kindness, and trustworthiness”[1]. It is about the development of the pupil’s knowledge and understanding of her or him 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. In primary schools the focus should be on “teaching the skills and knowledge that form the building blocks of all positive relationships, supporting children from the start of their education to grow into kind, caring adults who have respect for others and know how to keep themselves and others safe.”[2] This would include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe. In Secondary schools RSE should “provide young people with the information they need to develop healthy, safe and nurturing relationships of all kinds…By supporting confidence and self-esteem, RSE will enable young people to make their own choices about whether and when to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, once they reach the age of consent, and to resist pressure to have sex.”[3]

STATUTORY CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSHE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. (There is also a separate requirement for maintained secondary schools to teach about HIV, AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. This does not apply to academies).
However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSHE go further

RATIONALE:

We believe that every person is entitled to dignity and freedom, having been created in the image and likeness of God.

“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.
At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity; Father, Son and Spirit in communion, united in 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. RSHE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationship as it is there that sexuality grows and develops.

[1] Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers, July 2025, p.2
[2] Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers, July 2025, p.7
[3] Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers, July 2025, p.11

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 RSHE 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.

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

5 The Centrality of Virtue

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.

6 Aims & Objectives of RSHE

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSHE 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"[4] 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;

[4] *Gravissimum Educationis* 1

• 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.

7 Inclusion & Differentiated Learning

We will ensure RSHE 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 looking at these questions, it is important to draw links to the school's inclusion policy).

8 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

9 Content of the Curriculum

Three aspects of RSHE - attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills will be provided in three inter-related ways: the whole school / ethos dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific relationships and sex curriculum. 'Life to the Full' resources will be used in addition to the Science curriculum, the Religious Education Directory (RED) RE programme and the No Outsiders - Everyone's Welcome programme.

Programme & Resources

The RSHE programme that we follow is called 'Life to the Full.' It was developed by Ten: Ten Resources who are a Catholic Education online site. We felt that this was a suitable programme to follow as not only is it based on the Model RSE Curriculum as outlined by the CES, but it would also help to ensure that the delivery of our RS(H)E programme was within a Catholic context. The specific RS(H)E curriculum consists of 3 modules which are covered throughout the year. These are:

1 – Created & Loved By God (Advent Term)
2 – Created To Love Others (Lent Term)
3 – Created To Live In Community (Pentecost Term)

Each module will consist of units of work that allow our children to explore different areas of learning related to the module being studied. Each module will be underpinned by religious understanding to ensure that we are teaching our RSHE programme within a Catholic context that is pertinent to the school. The reasoning for covering the modules in this way is because the work in the Religious understanding unit of each module, links to work that is covered in the new Religious Education Directory (RED) RE programme during that term also.
'Life to the Full' is a fully resourced programme which makes use of resources such as:

- Prayers
- Songs
- Stories

- Animated short films
- A short series called Paradise Street (Years 5 and 6 only)

10 Assessment

We will assess pupils' learning through a range of formative and summative assessment. Teachers will monitor pupil's progress throughout sessions and provide feedback based on this during the session (formative assessment). Each unit of work in 'Life to the Full' also has an assessment activity (summative assessment). Children may complete the activity at the start of the unit, and then again at the end of the unit so that overall progress across the unit can be seen The use of assessment in RSHE will allow us to ascertain where a child may need extra support in understanding in a certain unit or module, and to provide added support to help them develop and further their understanding.

11 Parents & Carers

We are committed to working with 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 where appropriate to help parents/carers to find out more. 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 were consulted before the original policy for RSHE was ratified by the governors. They were consulted at every stage of the development of the RSHE programme following the subject becoming statutory. They can view the resources used by the school in the RSHE programme. Our aim is that every parent and carer will have full confidence in the school's RSHE programme to meet their child's needs.

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.

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 Page 6 for further details on the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw).

12 Ensuring the Curriculum Is Balanced

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 RSHE 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 RSHE. 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.

13 Teaching the Programme

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lays with the class teacher. However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSHE programme. They 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

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 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 'Checklist for External Speakers to Schools' *(see Appendix)*. 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.

14 Teaching Strategies

The programme will be taught through a range of teaching strategies, including:

- establishing ground rules
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- brainstorming
- film & video & power point (age appropriate)
- group work
- role-play
- trigger drawings
- values clarification

Active learning methods which involve children's full participation will be used.

Single sex groups may be used occasionally as and when deemed appropriate, e.g., when talking about sensitive issues related specifically to particular sexes.

15 Other Roles & Responsibilities

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, e.g., 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.

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 Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

RSHE Co-Ordinator

The co-ordinator with the head teacher has 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. (They may be supported by the curriculum deputy and the member of staff with responsibility for child protection).

All Staff

RSHE 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 RSHE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSHE. 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.

16 Relationship to Other Policies & Curriculum Subjects

This RSHE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHE framework. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents (for example, Bullying policy, Safeguarding Policy etc)

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

17 Children's Questions

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSHE 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 RSHE. These may be matter 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 RSHE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. *(See also Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers, July 2025, p.40 for more detail.Link can be found in the attached Appendix)*

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.

18 Supporting Children & 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 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 DSL / DDSL on duty (Paul Phillips, Catherine Siobhan Minford, Rachel Pritchett, Jane Moreton, Stuart Wright, Lorna Atkins, Natalie Charity and Marianne Woolman)

19 Confidentiality & 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 RSHE 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., parents, head teacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken

20 Monitoring & Evaluation

The RSHE Co-ordinator, Stuart Wright, 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. 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 results of the evaluation should be reported to these groups of 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.

Head Teacher: Siobhan Minford
RSHE Coordinator: Stuart Wright
RE Coordinator: Siobhan Minford

Appendix

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers (2025)
Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance

GRAVISSIMUM EDUCATIONIS (1965)
http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html

CHECKLIST FOR EXTERNAL SPEAKERS / ORGANISATIONS INVITED

TO SCHOOLS

In this checklist **'School(s)'** means all Catholic school(s). For the avoidance of doubt this includes:

- Catholic voluntary aided schools;
- Catholic independent schools (including Catholic academies);
- Catholic sixth form colleges; and

- Catholic non-maintained special schools.[5]

As an integral part of its educational vision for the holistic formation of children and young people, the Catholic Church expects Catholic schools to promote and uphold high standards throughout their activities and this includes visits from external speakers.

All external speakers invited to schools should be of the highest quality and school leaders are responsible for ensuring that they have enough information about the content to be delivered by any external speaker to enable them to determine whether the content will be pitched at the right level for the age and level of maturity of the children and young people to whom the external speakers will present. All schools should have clear policies for the booking of external speakers which includes sign-off of the booking at an appropriately senior level and compliance with safeguarding checks.

Schools should also be mindful of the DfE guidance on "political impartiality in schools" which can be found by following this link:

Political impartiality in schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

This checklist should be completed *prior* to welcoming (and establishing collaborative relationships with) external speakers (and any organisation they represent) to ensure that the Catholic character of your school is preserved and developed in the external speaker's communications with pupils and parents and carers.

[5] For the avoidance of doubt, the CES advises that the DfE guidance and this checklist should be followed by all of the specified educational settings listed above. This is the case, even where the DfE guidance does not apply to the setting type.

Name of Speaker		
Question	**Answer**	**Actions needed/Comment**
Will the Speaker be supervised at all times during their visit? If not, why not?	YES ☐ NO ☐ FURTHER COMMENT ☐	
Have you carried out safeguarding checks (if appropriate) for the Speaker and have these been recorded in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures?	YES ☐ NO ☐ FURTHER COMMENT ☐	
Has the Speaker understood and confirmed that their communications in the school will: • Be respectful towards Catholic teachings • Not be prejudicial or detrimental to the Catholic character of the school • Not engage pupils in political activity and • Not cover certain partisan political views which are not deemed relevant or appropriate (provide details if applicable) • Be delivered in accordance with the	YES ☐ NO ☐ FURTHER COMMENT ☐	

requirements set out in the DfE's guidance on political impartiality in schools (if appropriate)		
Have you reviewed the resources/materials that will be used by the Speaker?	YES ☐ NO ☐ FURTHER COMMENT ☐	
Have you reviewed other resources produced by the Speaker (and by any organisation the speaker represents) even if they will not form part of the speaker's activities at the school?	YES ☐ NO ☐ FURTHER COMMENT ☐	
Have you conducted a general internet search using the Speaker's name (e.g. a google search)? If parents or children and young people conducted a similar search are any concerns likely to arise?	YES ☐ NO ☐ FURTHER COMMENT ☐	
Can you confirm that the political views espoused by the speaker/speaker's organisation are in compliance with British values and do not involve taking an extreme political position?	YES ☐ NO ☐ FURTHER COMMENT ☐	

Have school policies and procedures applicable to the speaker been explained to and understood by the Speaker?	YES ☐ NO ☐ FURTHER COMMENT ☐	
Are there any other outstanding issues or concerns with the Speaker and/or their suitability?	YES ☐ NO ☐ FURTHER COMMENT ☐	
Will the Speaker deliver content of a high quality that is appropriate to the age and maturity of the children or young people in the audience?	YES ☐ NO ☐ FURTHER COMMENT ☐	

If you have any concerns regarding the suitability of this Speaker, you should contact your Diocese to seek further clarification.

Signed _____

Position _____

Dated _____

Approved for booking

Senior Staff member Name _____

Position _____

Dated _____