



Bishop Douglass Catholic School

CARDINAL HUME ACADEMIES TRUST

RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION (RSHE) POLICY DRAFT TEMPLATE 2026

Secondary Schools

Principles

'The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.'

1 Corinthians 6:13

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is concerned with the emotional, social, physical and moral development of pupils. It provides young people with the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to develop healthy relationships, safeguard their wellbeing and make informed and responsible decisions as they grow towards adulthood.

RSHE includes learning about relationships, physical and mental health, sexual health, sexuality, consent, personal identity, online safety and the responsibilities associated with adult relationships. It involves both the provision of accurate information and the exploration of values, attitudes and responsibilities. It is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

This policy should be read alongside the Department for Education's *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education: Statutory Guidance* (2025), which came into force on 1 September 2026, and the Catholic Education Service Model Framework for Relationships and Sex Education.

Changes arising from the revised statutory guidance

The revised statutory RSHE guidance places greater emphasis on age-appropriate sequencing of the curriculum, parental consultation and transparency, online harms and pornography, consent and coercion, sexual harassment and misogyny, mental health and suicide prevention, and the careful and balanced treatment of sensitive and contested issues, particularly where there are differing views about sex and gender. It also places greater emphasis on the careful vetting and oversight of external providers and resources, and on parents being able to see the materials used to teach RSHE. This policy has therefore been updated to reflect these changes while retaining its Catholic character, overall structure and emphasis on partnership with parents. The detailed statutory content is reflected through each school's local curriculum/provision map rather than reproduced in full within the policy.

Ethos

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education are statutory in secondary schools.

As Catholic schools, we understand education in relationships and sexuality as part of the formation of the whole person. Every human being is created in the image and likeness of God and possesses an inherent and equal dignity. RSHE should therefore help pupils to develop knowledge, character,

virtue and the capacity to form relationships founded upon love, faithfulness, responsibility, dignity and respect.

We recognise that parents and carers are the first educators of their children and we will strive to work in genuine partnership with families.

In accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church, we teach that sexual relationships find their proper context within marriage and family life. At the same time, pupils are entitled to accurate and age-appropriate information about relationships, sexuality, sexual health and the law so that they can make safe, healthy, informed and responsible choices.

We will strive to ensure that RSHE is taught with sensitivity and respect for every pupil. Sexism, misogyny, misandry, homophobia, harassment, sexual violence, abusive behaviour and inappropriate stereotyping will be challenged. Pupils will be taught to treat others with dignity regardless of difference or protected characteristic.

RSHE is delivered through a number of areas of the curriculum, which may include Religious Education, Science, PSHE/RSHE lessons, assemblies and other specifically planned provision. Each school will maintain a local curriculum or provision map showing how the statutory requirements are met and how learning is sequenced through the school.

Aims of RSHE

We aim to:

- enable pupils to develop an understanding of healthy, loving and respectful relationships;
- develop pupils' awareness of the sanctity and dignity of the human person, created in God's image;
- enable pupils to develop relationships based upon mutual respect, responsibility, consent and freedom from abuse;
- support pupils through their physical, emotional, moral and spiritual development;
- develop self-respect, confidence, resilience and positive mental wellbeing;
- provide accurate, balanced and age-appropriate information;
- enable pupils to recognise unhealthy, exploitative, coercive or abusive relationships and know how to seek help;
- ensure pupils understand consent and the relevant legal framework;
- prepare pupils to make safe, healthy, lawful and informed choices in adult life; and
- work in partnership with parents, the Church, governors and the wider community.

Curriculum and Delivery

RSHE will be planned and sequenced so that teaching is appropriate to pupils' age, maturity and prior learning. We will strive to ensure that provision is accessible to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and adapted appropriately where necessary.

The curriculum will include the statutory content set out in the DfE guidance. In particular, pupils will be taught about:

- families, friendships, marriage, committed relationships and the characteristics of healthy relationships;
- puberty, reproduction and the transition to adulthood;
- consent, boundaries, sexual harassment, sexual violence, exploitation, coercion and abuse;
- sexual health, contraception, sexually transmitted infections and sources of appropriate professional support;
- the law relating to sex, relationships, consent, sexual offences, pornography, sexual imagery, female genital mutilation and forced marriage;
- the risks associated with under-age sexual activity and the benefits of delaying sexual activity;
- pornography and the ways in which it may distort attitudes towards bodies, sex, consent and relationships;
- online relationships and harms, including grooming, sharing sexual images, exploitation, harmful content, misinformation and emerging technologies including manipulated or AI-generated imagery;
- equality, respect and the protected characteristics;
- physical health, mental wellbeing and the importance of seeking help; and
- the values, virtues and responsibilities which contribute to healthy and fulfilling lives.

Teaching about sensitive matters will be factual, age-appropriate and non-judgemental while being rooted in the Catholic character of the school.

Where issues are contested, pupils should understand the relevant facts and law and be able to consider different perspectives respectfully. In accordance with statutory guidance, matters which are subject to significant debate will not be presented as though one contested position were established fact. This includes maintaining appropriate distinctions between biological sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. All pupils will nevertheless be treated with dignity and respect and bullying or discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated.

Teaching relating directly to suicide prevention, self-harm and eating disorders will be approached particularly carefully. It will be age-appropriate, supported by appropriate staff training and delivered in accordance with the current statutory guidance and safeguarding procedures.

Resources and External Providers

We recognise that responsibility for what is taught lies with the school. We will therefore strive to ensure that all resources used to support RSHE are accurate, age-appropriate, accessible, consistent with statutory requirements and compatible with the Catholic ethos of the school.

External speakers or organisations may be used where they add value to the curriculum. However, the school remains responsible for the content delivered. We will therefore ensure that the credentials of external providers, lesson content and resources are checked in advance and that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place.

Safeguarding

RSHE may lead pupils to raise concerns or make disclosures. Teachers will establish appropriate ground rules and will never promise absolute confidentiality. Any safeguarding concern will be dealt with immediately in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

We will strive to ensure that pupils know where and how to seek support, both within school and from appropriate external services.

Engaging Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents and carers have the prime responsibility for educating their children in matters relating to relationships and sexuality and we are committed to working closely with them.

Parents will be consulted when the RSHE policy is developed or substantially reviewed. Consultation provides parents with a genuine opportunity to comment upon the school's proposed approach, although it does not provide a veto over the statutory curriculum.

Schools will also engage with parents on an ongoing basis about RSHE provision. Parents will be provided with information about what is taught and when. A representative sample of resources will be shared as part of parent engagement, and parents may request to view all curriculum materials used to teach RSHE. Where copyright applies, the school will make appropriate arrangements for materials to be viewed or accessed without breaching copyright.

Right of Withdrawal

Parents and carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of RSE, other than content taught as part of the statutory Science curriculum.

There is no right to withdraw a pupil from Relationships Education or Health Education.

Before granting a request for withdrawal, the Headteacher will normally discuss the request with the parent or carer and explain the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parent's request.

From three school terms before a pupil reaches the age of 16, a pupil who has previously been withdrawn may choose to receive sex education.

Pupils

We recognise the importance of taking account of pupils' needs, experiences and questions. Pupils will be encouraged to contribute appropriately to the evaluation of RSHE provision.

Questions will be answered honestly and sensitively, taking account of pupils' age, maturity, the Catholic ethos of the school and the statutory guidance. Where a question is inappropriate for whole-class discussion, teachers may respond individually or refer the matter to parents or another appropriate member of staff.

Governors

The Governing Body will ensure that:

- statutory RSHE requirements are met;

- provision is consistent with the Catholic character and mission of the school;
- RSHE is appropriately led, planned and resourced;
- teaching is accessible to all pupils, including those with SEND;
- appropriate information is made available to parents;
- suitable arrangements exist for consultation and parental engagement; and
- provision is regularly monitored and reviewed.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this policy. Day-to-day leadership of RSHE will be delegated to the appropriate member or members of staff in each school.

We will strive to ensure that the quality, content and impact of provision are monitored through normal school quality-assurance processes. The views of pupils, parents and staff may be used to inform evaluation and future planning.

The policy will be reviewed in response to significant changes in statutory guidance or at least every two years. Material changes will be subject to consultation with parents before the revised policy is formally adopted by the Governing Body.

Each school will publish its current policy on its website.

Key References

- Department for Education, *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education: Statutory Guidance* (2025; effective September 2026).
- Catholic Education Service, *Model Framework Policy for Relationships and Sex Education* (2026).
- Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, *Learning to Love*.
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.
- Department for Education, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

Date approved: (date)

Date of next review: (date)

Appendix 1

School RSHE Curriculum/Provision Map

Each secondary school within Cardinal Hume Academies Trust will maintain an up-to-date local curriculum/provision map showing:

- the RSHE content taught in each year group;
- where that content is delivered within the curriculum;
- the broad sequencing of provision;
- any principal resources or programmes used; and

- how statutory RSHE requirements are met.

The curriculum/provision map forms part of the school's implementation of this policy and should be reviewed alongside it.