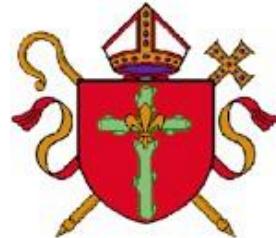


St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy

St Thomas Aquinas Academy Trust



Love One Another as I have Loved you
John 13:34

Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RHSE) Policy

Policy Date:	Sept 2024		
Policy Review Date:	Sept 2026	Charlotte Crosse	
Ratified by Governing Body:			
Bernard Attard and Clare Macdonald			

Our Mission

'Love one another as I have loved you.' John 13:34

In service of God first. More inclusive, more resilient, more hopeful, more for the world

Our mission at St Thomas More is to cultivate a community rooted in God's love, where love, respect, and kindness guide every interaction. We embrace inclusion, fostering an environment where every individual is valued and supported. Through empathy and compassion, we nurture strong relationships that promote resilience in the face of challenges. We are dedicated to inspiring a lifelong love of learning while strengthening the faith that empowers us to grow together. We strive to be a place where every child feels seen, heard, and appreciated, building a foundation for success and well-being for all.

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions about Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RHSE). We set out our rationale for, and approach to relationships and sex education in the school.

This policy has been drawn up by the Headteacher, Religious Education Coordinator and RSHE Coordinator in consultation with the Diocese of Nottingham, teaching staff and non-teaching staff, parents of children at St Thomas More CVA and the Local Governing Body (LGB).

Implementation and Review of Policy

Implementation of the policy will take place after consultation with the Governors in the Advent term 2026

Dissemination

The draft policy will be given to all members of the LGB, and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the document will be available to all parents through the school's prospectus 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 web site.

DEFINING RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

The Department for Education (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"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 fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults."² This would include the topics of Families and The People Who Care For Me, Caring Friendships, Respectful Relationships, Online Relationships and Being Safe. In Secondary schools RHSE 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

¹ Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 4

² Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 19

successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting 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.

However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSHE 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 RHSE 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. RHSE, 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) Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RHSE) 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 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 RHSE 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.

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. The following virtues will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

³ Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 25

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, emotional) and we believe that RHSE 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;
- 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 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;

⁴ *Gravissimum Educationis* 1

- 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.

INCLUSION AND DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING

We will ensure RHSE 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.

EQUALITIES OBLIGATIONS

The LGB 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 RSHE

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.

Programme / Resources

The pupils from Reception to Year 6 will use the Ten Ten Life to the Full Programme to explore RHSE at an age-appropriate level. Parents have access to the Parent Portal on the Ten Ten: Life to the Full Website. We will be following the 'Life to the Full' RHSE program from Ten Ten as approved by the Diocese. This programme features three themes which are repeated and built upon across the year groups. The three themes are:

Created and loved by God (this explores the individual)

The Christian imperative to love self, made in the image and likeness of God, shows an understanding of the importance of valuing and understanding oneself as the basis for personal relationships.

Created to love others (this explores an individual's relationships with others)

God is love. We are created out of love and for love. The command to love is the basis of all Christian morality.

Created to live in community – local, national & global (this explores the individual's relationships with the wider world)

Human beings are relational by nature and live in the wider community. Through our exchange with others, our mutual service and through dialogue, we attempt to proclaim and extend the Kingdom of God for the good of individuals and the good of society.

Each theme covers the core strands of 'Education in Virtue' and 'Religious Understanding', as well as strands which cover the PSHE content.

Appendix 1 to this policy provides further information about the programme content (page 9). Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques

- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- experiential
- active
- brainstorming
- film & video
- group work
- role-play
- trigger drawings
- values clarification
- prayer and reflection

Pupils' learning will be continually assessed through ongoing teacher observations and end of unit tasks.

Key Decisions

The Senior Leadership Team and Governors have made the following choices in regard to the Key Decisions.

These are set out below:

Key Decision 1: The Use of Scientific Terms for Sexual Organs

Sexual organs will be referred to by their scientific names from Year 1, affirming that privates are PRIVATE and should be treated with respect. In Key Stage 1 we talk to children about the differences between boys and girls. Here, it is important not to uphold negative gender stereotypes and, in fact, the non-physical differences between boys and girls at this age are small and difficult to define. By linking gender to biological sex, it helps children to understand the difference, equality and complementarity of boys and girls. If young children are better able to confidently articulate about private body parts, they are better equipped to identify experiences of feeling uncomfortable if any form of abuse takes place.

Key Decision 2: Puberty

At St Thomas More we will begin to teach about hormones and their effects on our emotions in Year 4. The menstrual cycle will also be discussed in Year 4.

Key Decision 3: Discussing sexual intercourse

At St Thomas More we will teach part one (foetal development) in school. Part two (sexual intercourse) will not formally be taught at school, but will be made available to parents to aid their discussions as first educators of their children. This will be made available through the Online Parent Portal. Teachers will answer questions that may come up about sexual intercourse with honesty and in an age appropriate way, acknowledging that for some children the safety and trusted setting of their classroom with a familiar teacher may be an important space for them to clarify key information or clear up misunderstandings.

Key Decision 4: The Pornography Issue

Children at St Thomas More we will not be introduced to the subject of pornography. It is not possible to identify and discuss pornography without the inevitable temptation for children to conduct their own research on the internet. It is also very difficult to discuss pornography without this leading to areas of RSHE far beyond what children are taught in RE and science in primary education. Therefore, it is not possible to discuss this without undermining other areas of the curriculum. Our children and parents

already receive regular guidance on the safe use of the internet and it is also part of our Computing curriculum.

Resources for parents wishing to discuss this with their children may be made available on the Online Parent Portal.

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 RHSE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning.

Parents must have been consulted before this policy is ratified by the governors. They will be consulted at every stage of the development of the RSHE programme, as well as during the process of monitoring, review and evaluation. They will be able to view the resources used by the school in the RHSE programme via the Ten Ten Life to the Full Portal. Our aim is that, at the end of the consultation process, every parent and carer will have full confidence in the school's RHSE 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 familiar and nurturing environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.

Please refer to the DfE guidance Page 17 for further details on the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw).

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 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 RHSE. 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 specific relationships and sex education programme lies with the RHSE Coordinator, the RE Coordinator and the Head teacher.

However, all staff will be involved teaching and developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RHSE 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 RHSE. 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 Catholic Education Service (CES) guidance 'Checklist for External Speakers to Schools' ⁵.

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 REGARDING RHSE

LGB

- draw up the RHSE 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;
- 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 RHSE within PSHE.

Headteacher

The Head teacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the LGB, 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.

All Staff

RHSE 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 wellbeing of their pupils. Teachers will be expected to teach RHSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RHSE. 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.

⁵ CES Checklist for External Speakers to Schools, 2016

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

This RHSE 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, Behaviour policy, Safeguarding Policy etc)

Pupils 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 pupils.

Learning about RSHE in PSHE classes will link to/complement learning in those areas identified in the RHSE audit.

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

The LGB want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RHSE 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.

Controversial or Sensitive issues

There can be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RHSE. 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 LGB believes that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RHSE 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 (RSHE) and Health Education, Managing difficult questions, Page 23 for more detail)

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 RHSE takes place. Effective RHSE 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 RHSE 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

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The RHSE Co-ordinator 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. The LGB will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. The LGB remains ultimately responsible for the policy.