



# St Stephen's RC Primary School

## Relationship and Sex Education Policy

### Vision

'**Every** child, **Every** chance, **Every** day!'

### Mission Statement

'Love one another, as I have loved you.'

*John 13:34*

### Our Values - St Stephen's CARES

Compassion, Ambition, Rejoice, Excellence, Service

|            |                                                              |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Compassion | <i>be compassionate in all of our actions</i>                |
| Ambition   | <i>be ambitious – better ourselves and those around us</i>   |
| Rejoice    | <i>be rejoiceful – celebrate the Good News</i>               |
| Excellence | <i>be excellent in everything we do – work hard always</i>   |
| Service    | <i>be a steward of the Lord – a service to the community</i> |

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| Policy developed  | September 2026 |
| Governor approval | October 2026   |
| Review date       | October 2026   |

## **SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

St Stephen's RC Primary School seeks to educate the whole child in partnership with pupils, parents and carers, governors, the Diocese and the wider school community. Our mission, "Love one another, as I have loved you", and our vision, "Every child, Every chance, Every day!", shape our approach to Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE).

Our CARES values – Compassion, Ambition, Rejoice, Excellence and Service – inform the way relationships, dignity, responsibility, wellbeing and personal development are taught and modelled throughout school.

This policy has been developed from the Catholic Education Service (CES) Model Framework Policy to Support Schools (2026), 2026 Ten Ten Life to the Full Plus programme overview and RSHE guidance (2026). It is intended to be read alongside the school's curriculum map and other relevant policies.

Consultation and review should include parents/carers, pupils where appropriate, staff, governors and relevant diocesan personnel, in line with the CES model.

## **Implementation and Review of Policy**

This policy will be implemented following approval by the Governing Body. It will be reviewed annually, and sooner where there is a significant change in legislation, statutory guidance, diocesan guidance or the school's curriculum approach.

The policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher, RSHE Lead, staff and Governing Body, with appropriate consultation with parents/carers and pupils.

## **Dissemination**

The approved policy will be published on the school website and made available free of charge to parents/carers and anyone who requests it. Details of the RSHE curriculum and progression will also be made available to parents.

Parents/carers will be given clear information about the content and purpose of RSHE and will be able to access information about the resources used, subject to licensing and copyright arrangements.

## **DEFINING RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION**

RSHE at St Stephen's encompasses Relationships Education and Health Education and includes the statutory elements of Science that relate to the human body, growth, puberty and reproduction. The school uses the term RSHE because this reflects the Catholic Education Service framework and the integrated nature of the provision.

Relationships Education at primary level focuses on the building blocks of positive relationships: families and people who care for pupils, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

Primary schools are not required to provide additional sex education beyond the statutory Science curriculum. St Stephen's currently does not provide a separate additional non-statutory primary sex education programme beyond Science.

## STATUTORY CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

This policy sets out St Stephen's RC Primary School's approach to Relationships Education and Health Education and, where relevant, sex education. It reflects the school's Catholic character and mission and has regard to the Department for Education's revised statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, in force from 1 September 2026.

Relationships Education is compulsory for all primary pupils. Health Education is compulsory in state-funded primary schools. Primary schools are not required to provide sex education beyond the statutory National Curriculum for Science. Where a primary school provides additional sex education, parents have a right to request withdrawal from that additional provision. At St Stephen's, we provide no additional sex education beyond that of Science teaching.

As a Catholic school, St Stephen's delivers RSHE in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church, alongside its statutory duties. The school has regard to the Department for Education's revised statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education, which came into force on 1 September 2026.

The school teaches the statutory National Curriculum for Science, including relevant learning about the human body, growth, puberty and reproduction. Parents do not have a right to withdraw pupils from statutory Relationships Education, Health Education or Science.

## RATIONALE

"I have come that you might have life and have it to the full." (John 10:10)

We are involved in relationships and sex education precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. The belief in the unique dignity of every human person, made in the image and likeness of God, underpins the approach to education in a Catholic school.

At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity: Father, Son and Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship. RSHE is therefore placed firmly within the context of relationship and human dignity. It is positive and prudent, helping pupils to understand the goodness of human relationships and the responsibilities, risks and choices that accompany them.

All RSHE will be in accordance with the Church's moral teaching. It will emphasise the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life, while respecting the dignity and lived circumstances of every pupil and preparing pupils for life in modern Britain.

RSHE is part of the school's mission to educate the whole child: spiritually, physically, intellectually, morally, socially, culturally and emotionally. In partnership with parents and carers, St Stephen's seeks to provide a positive and prudent education compatible with pupils' physical, cognitive, psychological and spiritual maturity.

## VALUES AND VIRTUES

The programme explicitly promotes virtues that support pupils in responding to God's call to love others with respect for their dignity and the dignity of the human body. These include faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

Across the programme, pupils are supported to develop reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility; respect for every human being; joy in the goodness of creation and their bodily nature; responsibility for their actions; self-respect and empathy; resilience; the ability to resist unwanted pressure; and the capacity to form friendships and relationships free from exploitation, abuse and bullying.

## AIM OF RSHE AND THE MISSION STATEMENT

RSHE is an integral part of the education of the whole child: spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural and emotional.

In partnership with parents and carers, St Stephen's seeks to provide a positive and prudent education compatible with pupils' physical, cognitive, psychological and spiritual maturity, rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

The programme aims to raise pupils' self-esteem, help them grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of every person and develop caring and sensitive attitudes.

The programme aims to:

provide a coherent, carefully sequenced and age-appropriate programme of Relationships and Health Education; help pupils understand the characteristics of healthy, respectful and caring relationships; teach pupils how to recognise unsafe, harmful or inappropriate behaviour and how to seek help; develop pupils' understanding of physical health, mental wellbeing and healthy lifestyles; build pupils' knowledge of online relationships, digital safety and responsible use of technology; promote respect for difference and challenge prejudice, harassment, discrimination and harmful behaviour; ensure pupils with SEND and other additional needs can access and understand essential RSHE knowledge; work openly and constructively with parents and carers; and deliver teaching consistent with the school's Catholic ethos while meeting statutory requirements.

## 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 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; and
- fidelity in relationships.

To develop personal and social skills including sound judgement, healthy friendship, managing emotions, managing conflict positively, compassion, self-esteem, resilience, resisting unwanted pressure, recognising online and peer influence, assessing risk and seeking help.

## Outcomes

By the end of primary school, pupils should have age-appropriate knowledge and skills enabling them to form and sustain positive relationships, recognise and report risks, seek help, understand their physical and mental wellbeing, use technology safely and responsibly, and respond to others with dignity and respect.

Pupils should know and understand the Catholic understanding of relationships and human dignity alongside clear, accurate scientific information required by the National Curriculum.

## **INCLUSION AND ADAPTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Every pupil is entitled to learn in an environment where they are respected and safe. Teaching promotes the dignity of every person and makes clear that unlawful discrimination, bullying, prejudice and harassment are unacceptable.

Teaching about equality and difference will be age appropriate, factual and respectful. Whilst St Stephen's is a Catholic School, where relevant, pupils will also be taught the applicable legal position and the requirement to respect the rights and dignity of others. The curriculum will not be used to encourage hostility towards any individual or group.

RSHE is an entitlement for pupils with SEND. Teachers adapt delivery without unnecessarily reducing the important knowledge pupils need in order to be safe, healthy and able to form positive relationships.

Teachers will: use clear, concrete and accessible language; pre-teach or revisit vocabulary where necessary; use visual supports, repetition, modelling and carefully selected scenarios; adapt pace and presentation to communication and cognition needs; consider sensory, social communication and emotional regulation needs; provide additional or individual teaching where necessary for essential safeguarding knowledge; and work with the SENDCo, pastoral staff, parents and relevant professionals where appropriate.

Adaptations will be planned particularly carefully for pupils who may be more vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, misunderstanding of social situations or online risk.

## **EQUALITIES OBLIGATIONS**

St Stephen's complies with the Equality Act 2010 and does not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of protected characteristics. The school actively challenges sexism, misogyny, racism, homophobia, discriminatory language, harmful stereotyping, harassment and other prejudice-based behaviour.

Where LGBT-related content is appropriate within Relationships Education, it will be integrated sensitively and age appropriately within the wider programme rather than treated as a stand-alone topic. The school's approach will respect the dignity of every pupil while remaining faithful to the school's Catholic character and teaching.

Reports of sexual violence, sexual harassment or other harmful behaviour are taken seriously and dealt with through the school's safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

## **BROAD CONTENT OF RSE**

The school teaches a planned and progressive programme. Relevant learning is also developed through Religious Education, Science, computing and online safety, PE, safeguarding, the wider personal development curriculum and the everyday relational life of the school.

By the end of primary school, pupils will have been taught age-appropriate knowledge across the statutory areas of:

- families and people who care for me;
- caring friendships;
- respectful relationships;
- online relationships; and
- being safe.

Teaching recognises that families may take many forms and that children should not be stigmatised because of their home circumstances. Pupils learn about love, care, stability, respect, trust,

kindness, conflict and repair, boundaries, permission-seeking, privacy, online behaviour and how to recognise and report abuse or unsafe situations.

Pupils are taught age-appropriate knowledge about physical health and mental wellbeing, including: mental wellbeing, emotions, self-care, resilience and seeking help; internet safety and harms, including the effects of online activity on wellbeing; healthy eating and healthy lifestyles; drugs, alcohol and tobacco, where applicable to the primary curriculum; health and prevention, including hygiene, sleep, sun safety and dental health; basic first aid; and the changing adolescent body, including puberty and menstrual wellbeing.

St Stephen's teaches the statutory National Curriculum for Science, including relevant learning about the human body, growth, puberty and reproduction. The school does not currently provide a separate programme of additional, non-statutory primary sex education beyond the Science curriculum.

Where RSHE learning addresses body parts, puberty, reproduction, relationships or safety, the school will distinguish clearly between statutory Science, Relationships Education, Health Education and any additional sex education. Parents will be informed in advance about sensitive content and the school will comply with the statutory arrangements for withdrawal where additional sex education is provided.

## **PROGRAMME / RESOURCES**

St Stephen's uses Ten Ten's Life to the Full Plus 2026 as its principal RSHE curriculum resource. The programme is organised around the Catholic vision of being created and loved by God, created to love others and created to live in community, with learning covering personal relationships, life online, keeping safe, emotional wellbeing, life cycles, physical health and the wider world.

The programme overview includes age- and stage-related content such as I Am Unique, Girls and Boys, Clean and Healthy, Feelings, Special People, Treat Others Well, Real Life Online, Good and Bad Secrets, Physical Contact, People Who Help Us, Friends, Family and Others, Safe in My Body, Recognising Risk, We Don't Have to Be the Same, Respecting Our Bodies, What is Puberty and Changing Bodies. The school uses professional judgement when selecting and sequencing content for its pupils.

Ten Ten is a curriculum resource, not a substitute for the school's professional responsibility. Leaders remain responsible for curriculum design, sequencing, accessibility, safeguarding, assessment, parent transparency and compliance with statutory and diocesan expectations.

The detailed curriculum map/progression document should be read alongside this policy. The school remains responsible for ensuring that the resource is used appropriately and that statutory, safeguarding, accessibility and diocesan requirements are met.

## **Teaching strategies**

RSHE forms part of the personal development of pupils at St Stephen's. It is taught primarily by class teachers and is complemented by learning in other curriculum areas and through the whole-school ethos.

Teaching strategies may include discussion, reflection, project learning, active and experiential learning, group work, role-play, values clarification, film and video, brainstorming, questioning, distancing techniques and carefully selected scenarios. Teaching will be participative without unnecessarily alarming pupils.

Teachers establish clear expectations for respectful discussion. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions, but personal disclosure is not required as part of learning.

## **PARENTS AND CARERS**

St Stephen's recognises parents and carers as the primary educators of their children. The school seeks to work in genuine partnership with families and to support parents in their role.

The school will:

- consult parents and carers as part of policy development and review;
- provide clear information about the content and purpose of RSHE;
- give advance information where sensitive or significant content is due to be taught;
- make curriculum materials available to parents in a way that enables them to understand what is taught, subject to copyright and licensing restrictions;
- provide opportunities for parents to ask questions or raise concerns; and
- inform parents of any material change to the school's approach or curriculum.

The school may use its usual parent communication systems, including electronic communication, to provide advance information and consultation materials.

Parents do not have a right to withdraw their child from statutory Relationships Education, statutory Health Education or the statutory Science curriculum, including Science content related to puberty or reproduction.

Where a primary school provides additional sex education, parents have a right to request that their child is withdrawn from that additional provision. As St Stephen's currently does not provide a separate additional non-statutory primary sex education programme beyond Science, there is presently no separate additional programme from which withdrawal is required.

If the school introduces additional sex education in future, parents will be informed in advance, the policy will be reviewed as necessary, and the arrangements for withdrawal will be clearly set out.

## **BALANCED CURRICULUM**

Promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, St Stephen's will provide a balanced programme. Pupils will receive clear scientific information and age-appropriate opportunities to understand the legal and safeguarding context relevant to their wellbeing.

Exploring facts, asking questions and understanding different perspectives does not require the school to promote behaviours or viewpoints that are inconsistent with Catholic teaching. The school will ensure that pupils receive the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights.

## **RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHING THE PROGRAMME**

### **17.1 Governing Body**

- approve and keep this policy under review;
- ensure the school has regard to statutory RSHE guidance and fulfils its legal duties;
- provide challenge and assurance regarding curriculum implementation, safeguarding, equality and parental engagement; and
- ensure appropriate resources, staffing and timetabling.

### **17.2 Headteacher**

- take overall delegated responsibility for implementation;
- liaise with governors, parents/carers and relevant diocesan and external bodies;
- ensure staff receive appropriate training and support;
- ensure safeguarding, equality and SEND considerations are embedded; and
- ensure parents can access required policy and curriculum information.

#### 17.3 RSHE Lead

- maintain curriculum progression and resources;
- support staff subject knowledge and delivery;
- monitor implementation and pupil learning;
- coordinate parent information and consultation; and
- review provision in light of statutory changes, pupil needs and school evidence.

#### 17.4 Teachers and support staff

- deliver agreed content accurately, sensitively and consistently;
- make appropriate adaptations while preserving essential knowledge;
- follow safeguarding procedures and report concerns promptly; and
- model respectful relationships and language.
- approve and keep this policy under review;
- ensure the school has regard to statutory RSHE guidance and fulfils its legal duties;
- provide challenge and assurance regarding curriculum implementation, safeguarding, equality and parental engagement; and
- ensure appropriate resources, staffing and timetabling.

### External Visitors

External visitors may enrich the curriculum but will complement, not replace, teacher-led sessions. Leaders will check the suitability of visitors, content and resources in advance.

Visitors must be clear about their role, intended learning and responsibilities.

Visitors must follow the school's safeguarding and behaviour procedures and the CES expectations for external speakers.

A member of school staff remains responsible for the lesson and pupils.

Any materials must be checked for age appropriateness, accessibility, accuracy and consistency with this policy.

Health professionals must work within the school's policies and agreed ground rules.

### OTHER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING RSE

The Governing Body, Headteacher, RSHE Lead and all staff have shared responsibility for ensuring that RSHE is implemented consistently, safely and in accordance with the Catholic ethos of the school.

Governors retain ultimate responsibility for the policy. The Headteacher has overall delegated responsibility for implementation. The RSHE Lead supports curriculum development, staff training, monitoring and parent communication. All staff contribute to the whole-school ethos and model respectful, healthy relationships.

## RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

RSHE is delivered as part of the school's wider personal development curriculum and is compatible with the school's Behaviour, Safeguarding, Online Safety, SEND and other relevant policies.

Science: the human body, growth, puberty and reproduction where required by the National Curriculum.

Computing: safe, responsible, respectful and secure use of technology, privacy and online risks.

Physical Education: physical activity, healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Religious Education: dignity, relationships, virtues, vocation, community and Catholic teaching.

Safeguarding and pastoral provision: recognising risk, seeking help, trusted adults and responding to harm.

Whole-school ethos: modelling kindness, service, respect, belonging and positive relationships.

RSHE is compatible with and should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding, Behaviour, Online Safety, SEND, Equality, Pastoral Care and Complaints policies.

Learning is complemented by Religious Education, Science, Computing, PE, safeguarding and the wider personal development curriculum.

## CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

St Stephen's promotes a healthy, positive atmosphere in which pupils can ask questions freely and feel confident that their questions will be handled respectfully.

Teachers will use professional judgement about whether and how to answer questions. Personal questions, questions that are inappropriate for the age group, or questions that suggest a safeguarding concern will be handled outside ordinary whole-class discussion as appropriate.

Pupils are encouraged to speak to parents/carers and trusted adults about matters arising from RSHE and to keep seeking help until they are heard.

## Controversial or Sensitive issues

RSHE contributes to the school's preventative safeguarding culture. Pupils are taught about boundaries, privacy, permission-seeking, appropriate and inappropriate touch, trusted adults, respectful language and behaviour, and how to report concerns.

Staff recognise that RSHE may lead to disclosures. No adult will promise confidentiality where a safeguarding concern may arise. Staff will follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy without delay.

Where a pupil asks a question that is outside planned age-appropriate content, staff will consider the child's age, developmental stage, safeguarding context, the school's Catholic character and the partnership with parents. If a question suggests abuse, is deliberately inappropriate, or is personal to the child, the adult may defer the question and address it separately in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Pupils will be encouraged to speak to parents/carers and trusted adults about matters arising from RSHE. Pupils will be reminded to keep seeking help until they are heard.

## **SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE AT RISK**

Children need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSHE takes place. Effective RSHE provides opportunities to discuss what is and is not appropriate in relationships and to recognise risks, abuse and harmful behaviour.

Where a teacher suspects that a child is a victim of or is at risk of abuse, the school's safeguarding policy will be followed immediately and the concern will be reported to the designated safeguarding lead or other appropriate senior member of staff.

RSHE will not replace individual safeguarding or pastoral support. Where pupils require additional help, the school will use its established pastoral and safeguarding pathways.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND ADVICE**

Parents and carers are encouraged to raise questions about RSHE with the class teacher or RSHE Lead in the first instance. Concerns that cannot be resolved informally will be considered under the school's published complaints procedure.

All governors, staff, parents/carers and pupils should understand the school's approach to advice and confidentiality. Lessons will have the best interests of pupils at heart. Confidentiality cannot be promised where a safeguarding concern arises.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Assessment in RSHE is proportionate and focuses on whether pupils have secured important knowledge and understanding. It is not used to assess pupils' personal beliefs, family circumstances or private experiences.

The RSHE Lead, senior leaders and governors will monitor implementation through:

- reviewing curriculum plans and progression;
- sampling lessons and learning where appropriate;
- discussion with pupils and assessment of what pupils know and remember;
- reviewing resources and their accessibility;
- checking provision for pupils with SEND and other vulnerable pupils;
- considering safeguarding, behaviour and online-safety patterns that may indicate curriculum needs;
- seeking staff and parent feedback where appropriate; and
- reporting key strengths, risks and next steps to governors.

Pupil voice will be used appropriately to evaluate whether pupils remember and understand important learning, feel safe to ask for help and can apply taught knowledge. Pupil views may inform curriculum review, but statutory and safeguarding content will not be determined by popularity or preference.

Curricular development will inform school self-evaluation and improvement planning. Governors will consider evaluation evidence and recommendations before amendments are made to the policy.