



## Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Adopted by the Governing Body: November 2023

### *School Mission Statement*

***“To create and sustain, with God’s help, a learning, caring and serving community where all people are valued for who they are and who they may become in the light of Jesus Christ.”***

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This RSE policy was approved in its draft stage by the Full Governing Body on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Students and Parents/Carers have been consulted, and their views are currently under review. As such, this policy is a live document in the hands of the Relationships and Sex Education Working Group at St. Bede’s, headed by Mr. D. Johnson, Head of Theology.

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<b>DATE WRITTEN</b>	July 2021
<b>PARTIES INVOLVED</b>	RSE Working Group Science Department School Chaplain

## **What is Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)?**

RSE gives students opportunities, at a time when they are becoming sexually aware, to learn about, identify, and develop healthy, respectful, loving, and morally responsible relationships of all kinds.

### **Context**

This new RSE policy is based on St. Bede's 2017 RSE policy. It has been written, reviewed and revised by a Working Group of staff, and is being presented for consultation to students, parents, staff, and Directors. It is informed and guided by a range of documents, the most notable being:

- the statutory guidance for *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education* (DfE 2019)
- the Church of England's teaching document *Living in Love and Faith* (2020)
- Pope Francis's Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* ("The Joy of Love") (2016)
- the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales' document, *Learning to Love* (2017)
  - the *Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia's RSE Guidance and Principles* (2019)

### **School Mission Statement**

*"To create and sustain, with God's help, a learning, caring and serving community where all people are valued for who they are and who they may become in the light of Jesus Christ."*

### **Rationale - Why do we teach Relationships and Sex Education?**

In the very beginning God, who in the mystery of the Trinity is a relationship of love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, created humans "in His image" to share in this love and to live together in relationships of love.<sup>1</sup> These relationships were soon spoiled, so God sent us His Son to be a light to overcome our darkness, and to give us an abundant new life.<sup>2</sup> Christ's death restored us through his self-giving, sacrificial love, and his life was a demonstration of the Gospel values he came to teach: love, mercy, forgiveness, reconciliation, compassion, and service. As an Inter-Church School, we place Relationships and Sex Education within this Christian context as part of a holistic approach which seeks to form as well as inform our students in loving, healthy, happy and fulfilled relationships in preparation for adult life.<sup>3</sup> They will be enabled to become deeply aware of the importance of Gospel values in their own lives, and to consider the ways these values might be applied in the complex, confusing, and changing reality of everyday life.<sup>4</sup> Through Relationships and Sex Education we hope to fulfil our mission statement by affirming our students in their God-given dignity, and offering them a vision of who they may become in the light of Christ. The importance of this mission is made clear in the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales' teaching document *Learning to Love*: "Without providing an education in this area, we leave many young people vulnerable to receiving their education second-hand, and often from sources which damage them and their capacity to love."<sup>5</sup> The school will always deliver RSE in partnership with parents and carers, who are the first educators of their children.<sup>6</sup>

### **How will RSE be taught?**

**RSE at St. Bede's will reflect the Christian and Inter Church character of our school.**

Our starting point for teaching RSE is "Sacred Scripture, the source of God's will revealed in His inspired Word"<sup>7</sup> which teaches us the sacred dignity of the human person created in the image of God:

*God created humankind in his image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.*

Genesis 1:27,28

This sacred dignity is served by the self-giving, sacrificial love modelled by Jesus Christ in his life and death, and illustrated in his teachings:

*Love your neighbour as yourself.*

Matthew 22:39

And so from God's Word we have the foundation upon which all RSE at St. Bede's rests: dignity and love. These revealed teachings, interpreted in the light of tradition and reason, are both our essential content and method: they form the basis of *what* we teach in RSE, and *how* we teach it. We will clearly and sensitively teach how marriage is, 'a vocation to holiness, through which men and women share in the love and creative purpose of God,' as stated in the Church of England's 1958 Lambeth Conference.<sup>8</sup> And while there is a diversity of Christian opinion around marriage and sex, "our faith calls upon us to consider marriage as the only proper state in which the sexual expression of love truly reflects its divine purpose."<sup>9</sup> We cannot promote any other view. That being said, the language of 'promotion' is unhelpful in an Inter Church setting where there is such a diversity of opinion within and between our church traditions. In RSE we will not promote *any* one Christian view, but present a diversity of Christian beliefs to our students for discussion, reflection, and study. As Pope Francis stated in *Amoris Laetitia*, "We do not have to control the other person, to follow their every step lest they escape our grip. Love trusts, it sets free, it does not try to control, possess and dominate everything."<sup>10</sup> We hope to demonstrate this love as educators when we teach RSE. We do this so that all students, regardless of their opinion, family background, identity, orientation, or faith, can hear a message of how to love based on everyone's God-given dignity, and the importance of self-giving and sacrifice to a fulfilled life. And wherever it is appropriate, opportunities will be given to students to appreciate the importance of Gospel values in relationships: forgiveness, mercy, reconciliation, compassion, and service so that they might grow in the light of Christ.<sup>11</sup> These are what we will promote: not a particular Church's teaching, but the principles and values that all Christians share, and that everyone can receive.

**RSE will be taught within PSHE, Theology, and Science lessons across all year groups, age-appropriately.** However, all members of staff will have cognisance of this policy as issues relating to RSE can be raised at any time by students, whether it's in other lessons, in tutor time, the chaplaincy, or in conversations outside of the classroom. RSE, then, becomes part of a wider education offered by St. Bede's, closely related to our Christian ethos.

**Close liaison with the SENCO will be maintained in order to ensure the availability of appropriate resources and support for students with special needs.**

**RSE will be inclusive and pastoral.** Research strongly suggests that the majority of our LGBTQ+ students regularly encounter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and behaviour, within school and in wider society. They live in a heteronormative world in which, because of something they do not choose, they are often caused to feel different, alone and confused. The

prejudice and discrimination they face can often lead to poor mental health, with self-harm and suicidal thoughts being very high for these students compared to the average student. It is important, then, that RSE is pastoral, providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all students and staff. In order to do this staff should challenge homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language whenever they encounter it, along with other prejudicial and hurtful language. This may be in the form of questioning word choices, linking this type of language to other prejudicial language (e.g. racist slurs), explaining the emotional impact for people on hearing that language, or referring to our school prayer and mission statement, where we use our words to be 'loving and understanding' and aim to 'value everyone for who they are'. Comments and questions, when inappropriate or undermining, can be as damaging as slurs, so should be challenged in the same way. When teaching RSE – and subjects in general – staff will strive for non-gendered language and inclusive, diverse representation so that all students feel recognised and valued regardless of their identity or characteristics. RSE will educate students both of the harm caused by hate speech, homophobia, biphobia or transphobia, and the dangers of committing hate crime if intolerance flourishes into adulthood and the wider world. Ultimately, RSE is a pastoral endeavour, and concerns the wellbeing of all our students, none of whom we wish to feel abandoned or unsupported especially as they navigate potentially confusing and complex feelings and experiences.

**RSE will sometimes use outside agencies to deliver RSE.** In order to incorporate the full spectrum of expertise in our RSE provision, it will be necessary, as appropriate, to involve outside agencies. These agencies will be in sympathy with the school's approach to RSE, and their use discussed with the Headteacher or member of SLT who has oversight of RSE. Such visitors will never work alone in a class and there will always be a clear written agreement beforehand of what is expected of them.

**RSE will follow the school's Confidentiality and Safeguarding policies.** In our school, we have a clear and explicit confidentiality policy, which is shared with staff, students and parents/carers:

- Staff are unable to offer absolute confidentiality.
- We will reassure young people that staff will act in their best interests and that this may involve sharing information when the young person is at risk of harm.
- Young people will be told if information is to be shared (unless the young person is very young or has significant special needs) and will be offered appropriate support.

Professionals, such as school nurses and youth workers, are bound by their professional codes of conduct when offering advice and guidance to individual pupils in a school-based health service such as a "drop-in centre". This often involves offering a greater level of confidentiality to young people than school staff may give. However, in a classroom or other teaching situations when they are contributing to our planned RSE programme, they will follow the school's confidentiality policy. Health professional and youth workers will ensure that young people are aware of this when beginning work with them.

We recognise that because effective RSE will alert young people to what is appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviour, there is an increased possibility that a disclosure relating to abuse may be made. All staff are aware of the Child Protection procedures and will report the disclosure to the designated person for child protection immediately. As any new legislation is introduced a longer review and evaluation process will take place involving Directors, parents/carers, and whole staff.

**What will be taught, and when?**

The content of RSE falls into two categories:

1. Compulsory content relating to aspects of human reproduction which form part of the Science curriculum and from which parents/carers have no right to withdraw their children.
2. Compulsory content relating to families, respectful relationships (including online ones), the law, and equality.

**Parents and carers have the right to withdraw a child from any aspect of RSE that is not covered in the Science curriculum.** Parents and carers who are considering this are advised in the first instance to contact the Head to discuss their concerns. Please know that we support your decision should you choose to do so. We recognise that parents/carers are the primary educators of their children in how to build loving relationships, and we hope St. Bede's can play an important part in supporting them through its RSE provision.

**See Appendix 1 for the Curriculum Map which sets out the compulsory content of RSE, who is teaching it, and when.**

## APPENDIX 1 – Curriculum Map

Compulsory RSE and Health Education content for secondary schools	Year group and curriculum area	
On the issue of <b>families</b> , students should know:	Year 7	Year 10
<p>a. that there are different types of committed, stable relationships.</p> <p>b. how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.</p> <p>c. what marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.</p> <p>d. why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.</p> <p>e. the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.</p> <p>f. the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.</p> <p>g. how to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PSHE</b></p> <p><b>a</b> will be explored by <b>all year groups</b> during their topics on relationships, not just Year 7.</p> <p><b>b</b> will be explored by <b>Y7</b> as part of the Relationships topic.</p> <p><b>g</b> will be explored throughout all RSE topics across the Year groups as part of the school's signposting responsibility.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THEOLOGY</b></p> <p><b>a-f</b> will be explored by students in <b>Year 10</b> as part of their GCSE in Religious Studies. These topics will be covered in the area of study called <i>Relationships and families</i> in the exam paper 'Religion, philosophy and ethics in the modern world from a Christian perspective'. Students will be made aware of all family types and legal unions. The sacred nature of marriage is considered in depth and detail across church traditions, and the nature of the family and its importance to Christian life and the Church is examined. The features and importance of a Christian upbringing will be examined and evaluated in depth and detail.</p>

<b>Compulsory RSE and Health Education content for secondary schools</b>	<b>Year group and curriculum area</b>				
On the issue of <b>respectful relationships</b> , students should know:	<b>Year 7</b>	<b>Year 8</b>	<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Year 10</b>	<b>Year 11</b>
<p>a. the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship.</p> <p>b. practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships</p> <p>c. how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual</p>	<p><b>PSHE</b> a will be explored by students in <b>Year 7</b> as they explore the nature of healthy relationships, the nature of friendship, and commitment.</p>	<p><b>PSHE</b> b, d, e will be explored by students in <b>Year 8</b> when they examine the importance of respect in relationships, and consider examples and the effects of bullying.</p>	<p><b>THEOLOGY</b> f, g will be studied in Easter and Trinity by students in <b>Year 9</b>. They will examine consent, sexual relationships, and the law. They will also</p>	<p><b>THEOLOGY</b> c, h will be explored by students in <b>Year 10</b> in the <i>Relationships and families</i> and <i>Religion, peace and conflict</i> areas of study. Stereotypes and equality are studied</p>	<p><b>THEOLOGY</b> h will be explored further by students in <b>Year 11</b> as they examine and evaluate tensions between traditional Christian attitudes and the law.</p>

<p>orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)</p> <p>d. that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs.</p> <p>e. about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.</p> <p>f. that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control</p> <p>g. what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable</p> <p>h. the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.</p>		<p><b>THEOLOGY</b></p> <p>a, b will be explored by students in <b>Year 8</b> as they study ideas of virtue and happiness in the Epiphany and Lent half-terms as an integral part of the area of study <i>Life in the Holy Spirit</i>. A life of virtue is considered in relation to the sacrament of Confirmation and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Students compare such a life to</p>	<p>examine signs of an abusive relationship.</p>	<p>in depth in relation to gender, racial and sexual inequality. The impact of inequality on society is explored within the theme of 'Social Injustice' as students study Liberation Theology. Students are taught the difference between prejudice and discrimination.</p>	
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Compulsory RSE and Health Education content for secondary schools	Year group and curriculum area	
On the issue of <b>online and media relationships</b> , students should know:	<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Year 10</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online</li> <li>b. about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online.</li> <li>c. not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them.</li> <li>d. the impact of viewing harmful content.</li> <li>e. that specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners.</li> <li>f. what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.</li> <li>g. that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail.</li> <li>h. how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PSHE</b></p> <p><b>a-h</b> will be examined by students in <b>Year 9</b> as they learn about the dangers of sexting, receiving indecent images, and the law.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PSHE</b></p> <p><b>d, e</b> will be explored in <b>Y10</b> as they learn further about respectful, healthy relationships</p>
		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THEOLOGY</b></p> <p><b>c-e</b> will be studied in <b>Year 10</b> in <i>Relationships and families</i> as students explore the Christian understanding of sexual union and St. Paul's teaching of the body as a 'temple of the Holy Spirit'.</p>

Compulsory RSE and Health Education content for secondary schools	Year group and curriculum area			
On the issue of <b>being safe</b> , students should know:	Year 7	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
<p>The concepts of, and laws relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. sexual consent</li> <li>b. sexual exploitation</li> <li>c. grooming</li> <li>d. coercion</li> <li>e. harassment</li> <li>f. rape</li> <li>g. forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM,</li> <li>h. domestic abuse</li> <li>i. how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online).</li> </ul>	<p><b>PSHE</b></p> <p><b>g</b> the law about FGM will be explained to <b>Y7</b> as part of their topic on puberty.</p>	<p><b>PSHE</b></p> <p><b>a</b> will be explored in <b>Y9</b> as they learn about consent in healthy relationships.</p> <p><b>i</b> will be explored in <b>Y9</b> as part of the healthy relationships topic.</p>	<p><b>PSHE</b></p> <p><b>b</b> will be explored in <b>Y10</b></p> <p><b>c</b> will be examined in Year 8 as part of the topic on Being Safe Online</p> <p><b>d-f, h-i</b> will be explored by <b>Y10</b> as part of their topic on Healthy and unhealthy Relationships</p>	<p><b>THEOLOGY</b></p> <p><b>g</b> will be explored by students in <b>Year 11</b> within the area of study <i>Dialogue between religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes</i> in the 'Religion, philosophy, and ethics' exam paper. Non-British cultural practices will be examined and evaluated in relation to those British Values promoted by the UK government.</p>

Compulsory RSE and Health Education content for secondary schools	Year group and curriculum area				
On the issue of intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health, students should know:	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
<p>a. how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship.</p> <p>b. that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.</p> <p>c. the facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause</p> <p>d. that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.</p> <p>e. that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex</p> <p>f. the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available.</p> <p>g. the facts around pregnancy including</p>	<p><b>SCIENCE</b>  <b>h</b> is taught in Year 7 when students learn the biological process of conception, labelling the male and female reproductive systems, and learning the stages of menstruation, pregnancy, and birth. IVF is referred to.</p>	<p><b>PSHE</b>  <b>a</b> will be explored in <b>Y9-11</b> in their topics linked to healthy relationships  <b>k</b> will be explored only partially by students in <b>Year 8 and 9</b> as they are introduced to the risks of alcohol.</p>	<p><b>PSHE</b>  <b>d, f, i-j, l</b> will be explored by students in Easter and Trinity of <b>Year 9</b>. Students will be taught that abstinence is promoted as the only safe way to avoid unwanted pregnancies and STIs. How to detect warning signs of abusive behaviours will also be taught.</p>	<p><b>THEOLOGY</b>  <b>a-b, e-f, i-k</b> will be explored by students in <b>Year 10</b> as Christian attitudes towards contraception examined and evaluated in depth and detail. The nature of the sexual union will be taught in the light of Catholic teaching on Natural Law, with reference to Pope John Paul II's 'Theology of the Body'. All Christian and non-Christian attitudes towards sex and relationships will be examined in depth and detail. A range of</p>	<p><b>SCIENCE</b>  <b>c, f, i</b> will be studied by <b>Year 11</b> students in Science as part of the GCSE when they learn about methods of contraception, and the efficacy, advantages and drawbacks of each method in relation to reproduction and health, including diseases and infections.</p>

<p>miscarriage.</p> <p>h. that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help).</p> <p>i. how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing</p> <p>j. about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment</p> <p>k. how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.</p> <p>l. how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment</p>			<p>Students are taught the Anglican and Catholic church's views. STIs. They will be signposted to NHS contraception and sexual health services.</p>	<p>normative ethical approaches to relationships and their consequences will be taught, such as Virtue Ethics, Situation Ethics, Utilitarianism, and Deontological Ethics. Students will be taught a range of Christian views on same-sex relationships.</p>	<p><b>THEOLOGY</b></p> <p>c, g-h will be taught to students in <b>Year 11</b> when they explore in depth and detail Christian and Humanist views on abortion and fertility treatments in the <i>Dialogue</i> area of study in the 'Religion, philosophy and ethics' exam paper.</p>
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## **APPENDIX 2 – Clubs and Activities**

### **SAGA – the Sexuality and Gender Acceptance student body**

For a number of years, St Bede's has had a group devoted to providing a safe space for students in the LGBTQ+ community and their allies. It is peer-led but supported by a member of the teaching staff who is on hand to advise, support and advocate for the students. It is designed to provide a safe and accepting place with its name reflecting this mission - SAGA - Sexuality and Gender Acceptance group. It was not able to be run during COVID effected times, but the designated member of staff continued to be on hand as someone who students could approach if they need support or advice. From this group has come work on educating students across the school about homophobia and transphobia and the damage it causes in an assembly, as well as an increased awareness of diversity among the staff and student body, culminating in St Bede's hosting School Diversity events in June, run by another member of staff responsible for the provision of PSHE.

### **School Diversity Week**

In 2021 we launched School Diversity Week at St. Bede's. Although it focussed on our LGBTQ+ community in its inaugural year, it also educates students in a wider range of issues. The aim of 2021 Diversity Week is set out below:

*The purpose of School Diversity Week is to promote equality for all our students, especially focusing on caring and protecting our LGBTQ+ students as a marginalised group. No activity will be designed with the intention of 'promoting' LGBTQ+ or treating it as a choice or anything other than the way some people are born. Resources and plans will be shared with SLT and the school chaplain in advance, and the chaplain and the Head Teacher will be in charge of the central messaging of the week. Students will be taught about there being a range of Christian views on the issue of homosexuality, although messaging and teachings must not be detrimental to these already vulnerable and marginalised students or encourage any student to consider hate speech, homophobia, biphobia or transphobia as appropriate. Many resources will come from the charitable organisation 'Just Like Us'. Plans made will be mindful of the range of views held by staff at St Bede's and no member of staff will be expected to lead on anything that is contrary to their religious beliefs. Feedback will be sought at the end of each School Diversity Week to help inform future planning and take into account the full range of views, while prioritising the wellbeing and mental health of students and preparing them to live in a diverse world as tolerant and caring citizens.*