

ST CUTHBERT MAYNE SCHOOL
Joint Catholic and Church of England 11-18 Comprehensive School
Dioceses of Plymouth and Exeter



St Cuthbert Mayne School
Relationship & Sex Education Policy

Adopted by Standards Committee: May 2026

Reviewed by Full Governing Body: July 2026

Next Review Date: May 2027

Relationship, Sex and Health Education Policy

Introduction

St Cuthbert Mayne recognises parents as the primary educators of their children and has its own responsibility in supporting, supplementing and carrying forward education in relationships, sex and health through its curriculum. It has sought to do this in partnership with local feeder schools, both Roman Catholic and Anglican, in order to ensure continuity and consistency. We recognise as a school we have an important and complementary role to play in helping all students prepare as young adults for growth into full Christian maturity.

Definition

“Relationships and Sex Education is a lifelong learning process of acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs and attitudes about relationships, feelings, sex and sexuality” (based upon Sex Education Forum statement 1999).

Context

At St Cuthbert Mayne we wish to express a very positive attitude towards relationships and human sexuality. We affirm the intrinsic value of every person made in the image of God and that each one of us is placed in community for relationship with others. We further affirm that our sexuality is a gift of God to be celebrated and rightly expressed. These affirmations and this RSE Policy are set in the context and flow out of the Christian Faith and its ethos and values that we share as Roman Catholics, Anglicans and as members of other Christian traditions. At the same time we are aware that we live within the context of a complex and fast-changing society where convictions and practices have changed enormously. We acknowledge that our Policy is set in the context of each young person’s home/personal circumstances and needs to be applied with sensitivity and respect. We work within the context of United Kingdom Education Acts and other legislation and in particular the Department for Education’s Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance.

Roman Catholic and Church of England Views

Within the context of our joint church school we take into account perspectives of both churches.

The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales has stated, “The Church has always recognised that it is the privilege and responsibility of the family to inform and educate their children in all matters pertaining to human growth and development, particularly in the sensitive area of sexual development”. It called for schools to assist by collaborating with the family and “to consider their role in such education and to review their programmes so that our children and young people are given positive guidance and a true appreciation of all their human gifts”.

From a Church of England perspective, relationships and sex education, “should be set in a context which is consistent with the school’s Christian ethos and values. It is taught within a framework of Christian values and the Christian understanding that sex is a gift of God and part of creation.” (Anglican Diocesan Guidelines 2010).

Aims

- ☐ To provide our students with an understanding of the nature and importance of the unique and whole person “created male and female in the image of God”, respecting life as a gift from God.
- ☐ To teach RSE with the belief in people’s absolute worth and the unconditional infinite love of God.
- ☐ To support the life-long spiritual, personal, moral, and social development of all our students.

- ☐ To ensure that they have the ability to accept their own and others' sexuality in positive ways without fear of being stigmatised.
- ☐ To encourage relationships based on mutual respect, dignity and responsibility free from any abuse, as children of God, enlightened by our Christian faith.

Overall Objectives

Within the context of our shared Christian Faith to enable our students:

- ◆ to understand the physical and emotional development that occurs during adolescence and beyond;
- ◆ to value and build loving relationships;
- ◆ to understand the importance of mutual responsibility, trust and respect within these relationships;
- ◆ to recognise emotional need and to grow in emotional maturity;
- ◆ to see Christian marriage as the loving, life-long union between a woman and a man, within which sex is an integral expression of this deep love;
- ◆ to value family life and the responsibilities of parenthood;
- ◆ To learn the significance of marriage and families as key building blocks of community and society;
- ◆ to increase awareness of the need for dignity and respect of oneself and of others;
- ◆ To be taught to have respect for their own and other people's bodies;
- ◆ to know the meaning of the virtue of chastity and to understand that it is to be respected and valued;
- ◆ to understand the values underlying sexual behaviour, enabling students to make informed and responsible decisions;
- ◆ to be made aware of the dangers of sex being used compulsively, competitively and destructively;
- ◆ to develop an awareness and understanding of spiritual, physical and emotional issues relating to sexual activity;
- ◆ To be made aware of the way in which peer pressure, advertising and all media influence their views about relationships and sex;
- ◆ to know and understand how British law applies to sexual relationships including consent.
- ◆ to be made aware of grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, both through coercive and controlling behaviours.
- ◆ to be made aware of the physical and emotion damaged caused by Femal Genital Mutilation (FGM) and the role of the law in protecting those at risk.

- ◆ To teach students to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It should enable young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity.
- ◆ To develop knowledge about safer sex and sexual health to ensure that young people are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. This is delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way and allows scope for young people to ask questions in a safe environment.
- ◆ To understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect. Through gaining the knowledge of what a healthy relationship is like, students can be empowered to identify when relationships are unhealthy.
- ◆ To develop the skills to use the Internet safely. Students will be taught the rules and principles for keeping safe online. This will include how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and to whom to report issues.
- ◆ Many students are unfortunately exposed to harmful behaviours online, and via other forms of media, which may normalise violent sexual behaviours. A focus on healthy relationships and broader Relationships Education will help young people understand acceptable behaviours in relationships.
- ◆ To abide by the Equality Act 2010 in the teaching of sexual orientation (LGBTQ+) and gender reassignment being protected characteristics. The school will not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics).

Statutory Requirement: What will we achieve by the end of KS4?

The Department for Education's Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance states that **all** students will have developed the following skills and understanding.

Physical Health and Mental Well-being

Mental wellbeing

Students should know:

- how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.
- that happiness is linked to being connected to others.
- how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns.
- common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression).
- how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health.
- the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.

Internet safety and harms

Students should know:

- the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting

unrealistic expectations for body image, how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships including social media, the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online.

- how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours.

Physical Health and fitness

Students should know:

- the positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress.
- the characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardiovascular ill-health.
- about the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation

Healthy Eating

Students should know:

- how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer.

Drugs, alcohol and tobacco

Students should know:

- the facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions.
- the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.
- the physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood.
- the physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency.
- awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks.
- the facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.

Health and Prevention

Students should know:

- about personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics.
- about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist.
- (late secondary) the benefits of regular self-examination and screening.
- the facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination.
- the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.

Basic First Aid

Students should know:

- basic treatment for common injuries
- life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR
- the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed

Changing adolescent body

Students should know:

- key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual wellbeing.
- the main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Families

Students should know:

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships
- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children
- 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
- why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships
- the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting
- 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.

Respectful relationships including friendships

Students should know:

- 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
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)
- 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
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help
- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable
- 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.

Online and Media

Students should know:

- their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- 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
- not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them
- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- the impact of viewing harmful content
- 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
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online

Being safe

Students should know:

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships
- 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)

Intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health

Students should know:

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

- 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
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage
- 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)
- 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
- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour

- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

Curriculum Entitlement

RSE will be delivered through specialist teaching in RE, Science and Personal Development lessons, Collective Worship and, occasionally, in Ready to Learn time. Personal Development lessons take place once every 2 weeks for years 7-8, and once every week for years 9-13. Data from Public Health England of the child health profiles for Torbay is also used to inform the Curriculum and identify specific needs. The National Curriculum Science order includes no reference to HIV, AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and aspects of human sexual behaviour other than biological human reproduction and development. However, at St. Cuthbert Mayne, HIV, AIDS and sexually transmitted infections are included in the Science and Personal Development curriculum.

The whole school is involved in the task of education in personal relationships, which include values, attitudes and judgements grounded in our Christian Faith. We believe that as a joint Church school, we have a responsibility to ensure that the information and values made available to our students are in the context of that Christian community. The Religious Education Department, in particular, provides programmes of study which covers sexual relations and their place within the context of Christian living. Other curriculum areas such as English, Mathematics, ICT, Geography and Personal Development may enhance the opportunities for learning about relationships and sex taking due account of the context of our Christian community.

We seek in the school community, the curriculum and in pastoral care:

- ◆ to generate an atmosphere within which students can ask questions and discuss sexual matters with sensitivity.
- ◆ to have an awareness of where students are in their knowledge and understanding, so that their concerns can be identified.
- ◆ to provide opportunities for formal Relationships and Sex Education as part of RE, Science and Personal Development curriculum
- ◆ to provide a forum where students can share their concerns and offer a climate of support where they know they will be listened to sensitively.
- ◆ to acknowledge and complement the role of parents/carers in these matters and to liaise with them.
- ◆ to encourage and promote the proper vocabulary.

Role of Parents/Carers

In recognising parents/carers as the primary educators of their children we aim to work alongside parents/carers in providing this education in relationships and sex within a Christian context.

In promoting this objective we:

- ☐ Inform parents/carers about the school's relationships and sex policy and practice
- ☐ Answer any questions that parents/carers may have about the RSE of their son/daughter
- ☐ Take seriously any issue that parents/carers raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for RSE in the school

- 2 Inform parents about the teaching of RSE in the school so that the parents/carers and school can work together to support the young person with regard to RSE. We believe that, through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, young people will benefit from being given consistent messages about their increasing responsibilities.

Parents have the right to withdraw their daughter/son from all or part of the RSE programme, other than that required by the National Curriculum. If parents/carers wish their child to be withdrawn from RSE lessons and alternative arrangements to be made, they should discuss this with the Headteacher. There is no right to withdraw from the Health Education element of the curriculum.

Links with Outside Agencies

Visitors and outside agencies are used to support the RSE programme. Careful planning is necessary to ensure that the visitor and the school are aware of the role and responsibilities of each party as well as how the session will fit into the broader RSE curriculum and Christian values framework of the school.

Through Pastoral Leaders, Pastoral Support Officers and the school Safeguarding and Welfare teams, concerns with regard to student health issues can be raised and help, advice and support offered.

The Education Welfare Service is also available to be consulted regarding any concerns. Links may then be made to Social Services if necessary.

Safeguarding – any disclosures regarding child protection issues that occur when following the Relationships and Sex Education programme, or at any other time, must be notified to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Walker immediately, who will follow safeguarding protocol.

Safeguarding and confidentiality procedures

Teachers conduct RSE lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a student makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved, in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as a matter of safeguarding under the age of 16. (This may be a matter for careful discernment if the disclosure reveals peer activity). Teachers will respond in a similar way if any student, including all sixth formers, indicates that he/she may have been the victim of abuse or grooming. If the teacher has concerns he/she will draw them to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead for child protection and safeguarding.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review of Policy

In line with Government statutory requirements the school must have an up to date policy published on the school website.

The Ethos Committee of the governing body monitors the RSE policy on an annual basis liaising with RE, Science and Personal Development departments. This committee will report its findings and recommendations to the full governing body, as necessary, if the policy needs modification or revision.

The Ethos Committee will listen carefully and give due consideration when reporting its findings to any comments from parents about the RSE programme.

The Governing Body requires the school to have a programme of study and schemes of work giving details of the content and delivery of the RSE programme currently taught. Resources are scrutinised to ensure that they are in accordance with the school's joint church Christian ethos.

Policy Links

The RSE policy has clear links to other school policies aimed at promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including the:

- ☐ Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- ☐ Behaviour Policy
- ☐ Anti-bullying Policy
- ☐ Pastoral Care Policy
- ☐ Collective Worship Policy
- ☐ Use of Images Policy
- ☐ Substance Use and Misuse Policy
- ☐ Equality and Inclusion Policy
- ☐ Special Educational Needs Policy
- ☐ Health and Safety Policy
- ☐ Confidentiality Policy

1 Corinthians 6 19-20

"Do you not realise that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you and whom you received from God? You are not your own property, then; you have been bought at a price. So use your body for the glory of God."