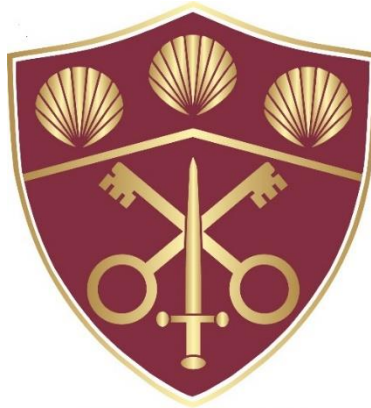


Ad Gloriam Dei et Servitium Omnium

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

The Palmer Catholic Academy

MISSION STATEMENT



Ad Gloriam Dei et Servitium Omnium

The Academy's Mission promotes the academic and personal development of each member of its community, both students and staff alike.

We serve Christ in each other to the Glory of God and Service of all.



Adoption by Governing Body of The Palmer Catholic Academy: Date of
Implementation: November 2024 (reviewed bi-annually or as required)
Signature of Chair of Governors:
Signature of Headteacher:
Next Review Date: November 2026

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

INTRODUCTION

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with students and their parents/carers, set out their intentions about relationships and sex education (RSE). We set out our rationale for and approach to relationships and sex education.

DEFINING RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION

The DfE guidance defines RSE as “lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage and family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health”¹. It is about the development of the student’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. The DfE identifies three main elements: “attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding”². However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE 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 academy. Our approach to RSE 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. RSE, 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) RSE 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 students. 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 RSE 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 students have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from and support will be provided to help students deal with different sets of values.

¹ Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfE, 2000

² ibid

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.

AIM OF RSE 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 RSE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, our academy aims state that we will endeavour to raise students' 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/carers, to provide children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education"³ which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education that believes each person is made in the image and likeness of God, and encourages the development of the 'fully alive' person in each area of their relationships. This is carried out in the context of supporting parents/carers as the first educators of their children.

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 bodies;
- 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;
- Faithfulness 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 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;

³ Gravissimum Educationis I

- being patient, delaying gratification and learning to recognise the appropriate stages in the development of relationships
- 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;
- 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; (Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from this part of the curriculum);
- how to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception;
- how to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

Outcomes

INCLUSION AND DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual students in respect to students' 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 students 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 (refer to Anti-bullying and Behaviour Policy).

EQUALITY OBLIGATIONS

The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and will ensure that our academy strives to do the best for all of the students, irrespective of the recognised protected characteristics of:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.
- or whether they are looked after children.

BROAD CONTENT OF RSE

Three aspects of RSE - attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding and personal and social skills will be provided in three inter-related ways: the whole academy / ethos dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific relationships and sex curriculum.

Knowledge and Information

Key Stage 3: Puberty, personal safety, friendship and love, family life and relationships gender issues, conception and birth, life stages.

The value of family life is an important aspect which is mainly covered in RE and in Citizenship/PSHE approached largely through a consideration of the qualities and relationships between the group of people, with an emphasis on stability, respect, caring and support.

Our programme will cover/include;

- Sex education lessons delivered in Year 7 are led by trained teachers who have experience in delivering this topic within the teachings of the Catholic Church. *Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from RSE lessons.*

Key Stage 4: Abortion and contraception, body image, sexual health and positive relationships
As part of the GCSE RE programme of study, issues of contraception, sexuality and abortion are addressed. Facts are presented in an objective and balanced way, with students being encouraged to consider their attitudes and values. They will be made aware of the difference between fact, opinion and religious belief.

Key Stage 5: Positive relationships and relationship issues

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

PARENTS AND CARERS

Parents and carers have the prime responsibility in teaching their children how to build healthy, loving relationships, and our Catholic schools provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children. Therefore, the academy will support parents and carers by providing material to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help parents and carers to find out more.

Parents and carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning. Parents and carers must be consulted before the RSE policy is ratified by the governors and should be able to view the resources used by the academy in the RSE programme.

Pope Francis:

The overall education of children is a 'most serious duty' and at the same time a 'primary right' of parents/carers. This is not just a task or a burden, but an essential and inalienable right that parents/carers are called to defend and of which no one may claim to deprive them. *Amoris Laetitia, 8*

THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

Parents/carers have the legal right to withdraw their children from Sex Education where this is not contained in the National Curriculum science orders. It is however, hoped that parents/carers sending their children to a Catholic Academy would see the importance of educating children in these matters within the context of the Catholic faith. Should parents/carers wish to withdraw their children they should notify the academy by contacting the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will discuss with parents/carers the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher (although the detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents/carers propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead).

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the academy will respect the parents'/carers' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the academy will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

The academy will provide support by providing material for parents/carers to help their children with their learning. The Catholic Education Service espouses the belief that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.

BALANCED CURRICULUM

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that students are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. Students will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE (relating to marriage, the age of consent, forced-marriage, female genital mutilation, violence against women and girls, online behaviours, pornography, abortion, substance misuse, violence and exploitation by gangs, extremism/radicalization, criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations) hate crime, and legislation relating to equality). Knowing about facts and enabling young people to explore differing viewpoints is not the same as promoting behaviour and is not incompatible with our academy's promotion of Catholic teaching.

We will ensure that students have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.

TEACHING THE PROGRAMME

RSE is jointly co-ordinated by the PSHE co-ordinator, Head of RE and Head of Science who are responsible for the overall planning interpretation and review of the programme.

However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE programme. They will be role models for students of good, healthy, wholesome relationships as between staff, other adults and students. They will also be contributing to the development of students' personal and social skills.

External Visitors

Our academy will often call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSE. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher led sessions.

Any external visitor is clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in academy delivering a session. Any visitor must adhere to our Code of Conduct, Behaviour and Safeguarding Policies. We record external visitors using the CES 'Checklist for External Speakers/Organisations Invited to Schools.

Health professionals follow the academy'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 RSE

Governors

The foundation governors of Catholic academies are appointed by the Bishop in order to promote and safeguard the Catholic character of the academy. As such, they should also be aware of implement the Church's teaching and any diocesan guidelines, regarding Relationships Education, Relationships, Sex Education, and Health Education, for the benefit of children and young people in their care. Governors will:-

- Draw up the RSE policy, in consultation with parents/carers and teachers;
- Ensure that the policy is available to parents/carers;
- Ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole academy policies, e.g., SEN, the ethos of the academy and the Church;
- Ensure that parents/carers know of their right to withdraw their children;
- Establish a link governor to 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 RSE within PSHE.

Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of the, Relationships, Sex Education and Health Education policy and its integration into the academy's curriculum and Catholic life; and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents/carers, the Brentwood Diocese Education Service and the Multi-Academy Trust.

PSHE/RSE Co-ordinator

The Co-ordinator with the Headteacher 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 RSE and the provision of in-service training.

All Staff

Relationships, Sex Education, and Health Education is a whole school issue. All staff will be involved in developing children and young people's personal and social skills and the attitude and virtues aspect of Relationships, Sex Education and Health Education programme. Furthermore:-

- 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 well-being of their pupils;
- Teachers will be expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the academy;
- Appropriate training must be made available for all staff teaching RSE;
- All staff should be included in the development of the RSE policy and all staff should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

This RSE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHE framework. It includes guidelines about student safety and is compatible with the academy's other policy documents (Anti Bullying policy, Safeguarding Policy and Behaviour and Discipline Policy).

Students 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 students.

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. They want to ensure that students 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 and young people.

Controversial or Sensitive issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE. These may be matters 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 governors believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and students, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. 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 RSE takes place. Effective RSE 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 students 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 academy's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ADVICE

All governors, teachers, support staff, parents and carers and students must be made aware of this policy, particularly as it relates to issues of advice and confidentiality.

All lessons, especially those in the RSE programme, will have the best interests of students 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.

Students will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in the programme. Teachers will always help students facing personal difficulties, in line with the academy's pastoral care policy. Teachers should explain to students that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance. Teachers will explain that in such circumstance they would have to inform others, e.g., the designated safeguarding lead, parents/carers (if appropriate), Headteacher, but that the students would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The RSE Co-ordinator will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of students work at regular intervals. The programme will be evaluated biannually by means of questionnaires / response sheets/needs assessment given to students, and / or by discussion with students, staff and parents/carers. The results of the evaluation should be reported to these groups of interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

RSE -Overview of each Year Group – A students Journey

RSE	My Journey begins					
Year	7	8	9	10	11	Sixth Form
Title -	My Body and Me	Emotions / Feelings	Meaning of a relationship, love, my actions	Respect / Responsibilities	Respect / Responsibilities	Take ownership of my Life
Term 1 Session 1	Who am I?	Identity- How have I changed. Created and Chosen	What is a relationship The search for love	Learning about each other Drop down day 1 Body Image	Where am I now? Drop down Day 1	Taking Stock -my responsibilities, at my age and the law
Term 1 Session 2	Changing Bodies - Puberty	Dealing with my new emotions. Appreciating Difference	Learning to be in control of my body / emotions - looking at sexual thoughts, ideas, social media use	Drop down day 2 Sexual Harassment-The Meaning	Drop down day 2 – Sexual Harassment-Part 2	Managing Risk-Students to recognise risk and consider safer choices around relationships and sex
Term 2 Session 3	Where we come from, physically and emotionally. Healthy inside and out	Differences I notice in others, friends, peers, family and adults. Feelings	Making good choices with relationships and my actions, individually or with others In control of my choices	Drop down day 3 Values – attitudes towards each other, except everyone without judgement	Drop down day 3 Sexual Health Tech abuse, sexual bullying between peers	Awareness of others around me and the impact my actions have on them. Dealing with a breakup and moving on.
Term 2 Session 4	Family and Friendships -the meaning.	How do I express my feelings/emotions, the good the bad and the ugly	What is Love, the path of a relationship	Drop down day 4 My consequences of my own actions, know my boundaries, both physically, emotionally and sexually	Drop down day 4 Celebration of my Journey from child, teenager, young adult	Tech abuse, sexual bullying between peers How to access local services for support.
Term 3 Session 5	Living Responsibly.	Learning about relationships, all relationships. What makes a partnership, relationship	The Law, your rights and how your action can have consequences	Drop down day 5 Understanding negative attention, exploitation	Summer Exams	Year 12 Work Experience prep - being in the company of older adults, how to respond to unwanted attention in the workplace. Year 13 Summer Exams

Term 3 Session 6	Open Q&A (linked to the above sessions). Pre-planning and prep for my Journey into Y8	Open Q&A (linked to the above sessions). Pre-planning and prep for my Journey into Y9	Open Q&A (linked to the above sessions). Pre-planning and prep for my Journey into Y10	Open Q&A (linked to the above sessions). Pre-planning and prep for my Journey into Y11	Summer Exams	Year 12 on placement Year 13 Summer Exams
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RSE -Overview of each Year Group – A students Journey

Year 7, 8 and 9 - RSE is taught in PSHE lessons. 2 RSE lessons a term.

Year 10 and 11 - RSE is taught during the drop-down days, one each half term.

Sixth Form - RSE is taught during Core RE once a term, 2 sessions in 1 Core RE.

Booklets and lesson plans are supported by TenTen, created in partnership with our Academy and TenTen <https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/secondary/>