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Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Policy Owner AH W&S	Associated documents 	Legal Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2026).
Review by SLC	Review frequency At least every 3 years	Next Reviewed date Sept 2028



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1. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

- 1.1. Catholic Schools, like all other schools in England are required to produce a written policy following the guidance issued by the Department of Education on Relationships Education (Primary) and Relationships and Sex Education (Secondary). Catholic schools are required to deliver RSE in accordance with the teaching of the Church. This approach is compatible with the guidance issued by the DfE.
- 1.2. This policy follows the Department for Education's statutory guidance (2026).
 - 1.2.1. The 2026 guidance reflects updated expectations around online safety, sexual ethics, and inclusive education. It strengthens the integration of LGBT+ content, permits factual teaching on gender identity, and introduces new content on AI, online misogyny, and ethical decision-making in relationships.
- 1.3. This policy is also underpinned by the Catholic Education Service's 'Model Catholic RSE Curriculum'. All teaching reflects the moral teachings of the Catholic Church.
- 1.4. RSE is part of the mission of Catholic schools to educate the whole person. It should be carried out as part of the holistic education which seeks to form as well as inform young people in preparation for adult life. (Catholic Education Service)
- 1.5. In September 2020, 'Relationships Education' became a statutory subject for all primary schools and 'Relationships and Sex Education' became a statutory subject for all secondary schools in England. The statutory guidance for governing bodies, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams and teachers was published in 2019 by the Department for Education. For Catholic schools, this new curriculum provides challenges and opportunities.
- 1.6. St Joseph's College have uses bespoke resources which include those developed by the TenTen Resources programme to ensure the implementations of a fully compliant curriculum and RSE Policy from September 2020. TenTen Resources programme is widely used across many Catholic schools in England and has been developed in line with the DfE guidance. The SJCR PSHEE programme has been aligned with the Catholic Education Service for curriculum content and standard of resources, which ensures schools undertake their statutory duty.
- 1.7. Please see Annex A for key documents which relate to the intent, implementation and required impact for the teaching of RSE.



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2. Defining Relationship and Sex Education

- 2.1. The DfE guidance states that "children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way". The 2026 guidance expands this definition to include ethical decision-making in relationships, the influence of online content (including AI and deepfakes), and the importance of recognising and challenging harmful ideologies such as misogyny and incel culture.
- 2.2. It is about the development of the pupil's knowledge and understanding of her or him as a sexual being, about what it means to be fully human, called to live in right relationships with self and others and being enabled to make moral decisions in conscience.
- 2.3. In primary schools the focus should be on "teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults." This would include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.
- 2.4. In Secondary schools the guidance states that RSE should "give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure)."
- 2.5. From September 2026, schools are expected to teach about online harms in greater depth, including AI manipulation, online misogyny, and pornography. Pupils should also explore sexual ethics and the impact of digital culture on consent and relationships

3. Statutory Curriculum Requirements

- 3.1. Over and above the statutory requirements for RSE, we are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE, which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. An outline of RSE taught through the Science Curriculum can be found in Annex B.

4. Rationale

'I have come that you might have life and have it to the full.' (Jn.10.10)

- 4.1. We are involved in Relationships and Sex Education precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. The belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in a Catholic school. Our approach to RSE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals.



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- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. 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 PSHEE framework as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils. It is centred on Christ's vision of being human as good news and will be positive and prudent, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.
- 4.4. 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 pupils have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from. It will also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

5. Value and Virtues

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. The following virtues will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

6. Aim of RSE and the Mission Statement

- 6.1. Our Mission Statement commits us to encourage, inspire, challenge and support our pupils to fulfil their potential in a community founded on Christian values and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education.
- 6.2. Furthermore, our school aims state that we will endeavour to:
 - 6.2.1. help pupils grow self-worth and self-confidence
 - 6.2.2. care for one another, respect opinions and value relationships
 - 6.2.3. learn to make ethical and moral decisions
 - 6.2.4. explore the spiritual dimension of life



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- 6.3. It is in this context that we commit ourselves in partnership with parents, to provide children and young people with a positive and prudent sexual education, which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

7. Objectives

- 7.1. To develop the following **attitudes and virtues**:

- 7.1.1. reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility
- 7.1.2. respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others
- 7.1.3. joy in the goodness of the created world and their own bodily natures
- 7.1.4. responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others
- 7.1.5. recognising and valuing their own sexual identity and that of others
- 7.1.6. celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love
- 7.1.7. recognising the importance of marriage and family life
- 7.1.8. fidelity in relationships.

- 7.2. To develop the following **personal and social skills**:

- 7.2.1. making sound judgements and good choices which have integrity, and which are respectful of the individual's commitments
- 7.2.2. loving and being loved, and the ability to form friendships and loving, stable relationships free from exploitation, abuse and bullying
- 7.2.3. managing emotions within relationships, and when relationships break down, with confidence, sensitivity and dignity
- 7.2.4. managing conflict positively, recognising the value of difference
- 7.2.5. cultivating humility, mercy and compassion, learning to forgive and be forgiven
- 7.2.6. developing self-esteem and confidence, demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others
- 7.2.7. building resilience and the ability to resist unwanted pressures, recognising the influence and impact of the media, internet and



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peer groups and so developing the ability to assess pressures and respond appropriately

7.2.8. being patient, delaying gratification and learning to recognise the appropriate stages in the development of relationships, and how to love chastely

7.2.9. assessing risks and managing behaviours in order to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity

7.3. To know and understand:

7.3.1. the Church's teaching on relationships and the nature and meaning of sexual love

7.3.2. the Church's teaching on marriage and the importance of marriage and family life

7.3.3. the centrality and importance of virtue in guiding human living and loving

7.3.4. the physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty

7.3.5. the facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation

7.3.6. 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

7.3.7. how to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice

8. Inclusion and Differentiated Learning

8.1. We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, faith or culture and is taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination.

8.2. 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.

8.3. Teaching will include factual, age-appropriate content on gender identity, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the 2026 guidance. Pupils will learn about the legal rights of



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individuals with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, and the importance of dignity and respect for all.

9. Equalities Obligations

- 9.1. The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that the College strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, pregnancy, maternity, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked-after children.
- 9.2. Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education is accessible for all pupils. This is particularly important when planning teaching for pupils with SEND. Teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility.
- 9.3. Through our safeguarding training, Staff are aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education and RSE can also be particularly important subjects for some pupils; for example those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities. Such factors are be taken into consideration when teaching these subjects.
- 9.4. Where appropriate content and teaching will be tailored to meet the specific needs of pupils. The College will ensure that teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate.
- 9.5. In line with statutory guidance, pupils will learn that some people experience same-sex attraction and that this is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. Teaching will be sensitive, factual, and rooted in the Church's call to treat all people with dignity and compassion



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10. The Right to Withdraw

- 10.1. We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.
- 10.2. However, parents/guardians continue to have the right to withdraw their children from Sex Education except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders.
- 10.3. Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the Assistant Head (Wellbeing & Safeguarding).
- 10.4. Please note that pupils may not be withdrawn from Relationships Education, this is mandatory.
- 10.5. The school will invite the parent for a discussion to understand their concerns. A child may override this request if they choose to receive sex education in the three terms before they turn 16. All withdrawal requests are formally recorded.
- 10.6. See the DfE guidance in appendix B for further details on the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw).

11. Balanced Curriculum

- 11.1. Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Catholic Church teaching, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues.
- 11.2. Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE (in secondary schools/academies relating to forced-marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion, the age of consent and legislation relating to equality).
- 11.3. The 2026 guidance encourages schools to explore ethical dilemmas and differing viewpoints around relationships, identity, and online influence. Pupils will be supported to critically evaluate online content, including AI-generated media and harmful ideologies.
- 11.4. Knowing about facts and enabling young people to explore differing viewpoints is not the same as promoting behaviour and is not incompatible with the College's promotion of Catholic teaching. We will ensure that pupils have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.
- 11.5. An overview of the RSE content can be found in the College PSHEE Curriculum Overview. Parents/guardians will be informed annually by letter which aspects of RSE



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

- 11.6. Parents have the right to request any and all materials used for RSE for their children. This should be done in writing to the Assistant Head (Wellbeing & Safeguarding).

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 12.1. The Head, Deputy Head (Senior), Assistant Head (Wellbeing & Safeguarding) and Lay Chaplain will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils work at regular intervals.
- 12.2. We regularly seek feedback from pupils through surveys, discussions, and reflection tasks to ensure RSE remains engaging, meaningful, and responsive to pupil needs. This feedback informs curriculum development and staff training priorities.
- 12.3. Monitoring will include evaluation of new content areas introduced in the 2026 guidance, such as online safety, sexual ethics, and AI awareness. Pupil voice will be used to assess understanding and engagement with these emerging themes.

13. Responsibility for Teaching the Programme

- 13.1. Responsibility for the specific Relationships and Sex Education programme lie with staff that have been suitably trained in this area and co-ordinated by the Assistant Head (Wellbeing & Safeguarding), Lay Chaplain, Heads of Year/Early Years, Head of Sixth Form and Prep Pastoral Lead.
- 13.2. All staff involved in delivering RSE receive regular training covering curriculum content, safeguarding, handling sensitive discussions, and the Catholic vision of the human person. New staff are inducted into these principles as part of our induction program.
- 13.3. However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE programme. They will be role models for pupils of good, healthy, wholesome relationships as between staff, other adults and pupils. They will also be contributing to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.

14. External Visitors

- 14.1. The College may 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.
- 14.2. It is important that any external visitor is clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in the College delivering a session.



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- 14.3. All visiting speakers to the College are checked for suitability.
- 14.4. Staff responsible for booking external speakers are required to email a copy of the External Visitors Policy in addition to completing an external visitor checklist, which includes an online search. The checklists are retained alongside the single central register and all visitors are expected to work within the terms and spirit of our RSE policy. They will ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice.

15. Relationship to other Policies and Curriculum Subjects

- 15.1. This RSE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHEE and RE framework and should be read alongside the PSHEE Policy. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the College's other policy documents.

16. Assessing RSE and PSHEE

- 16.1. In RSE and PSHEE there are two broad areas for assessment:
- 16.1.1. A pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - 16.1.2. How well a pupil can use their knowledge and understanding in developing skills and attitudes
- 16.2. Our assessment will be:
- 16.2.1. Planned as an integral part of teaching and learning
 - 16.2.2. Provide regular opportunities for pupils to receive feedback on their progress and achievements
 - 16.2.3. Include pupils in self-assessment and peer assessment
 - 16.2.4. Reflect evidence of progress in skills of participation as well as knowledge
 - 16.2.5. Include celebrations of reaching milestones and achievement
- 16.3. Assessment will be completed in 2 ways:
- 16.3.1. Lesson-by-lesson formative assessment, using baseline assessments, quizzes, peer and self-assessments and class discussions
 - 16.3.2. One summative assessment per half term (Prep) or per rotation (Senior) taking the form of a written piece of work or similar



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17.Children's Questions

- 17.1. The College wants to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place.
- 17.2. We want to ensure that pupils can ask questions freely, be confident that their questions will be answered, and be sure that they will be free from bullying or harassment from other children and young people.

18.Controversial or Sensitive issues

- 18.1. There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE. These may be matter of maturity, of personal involvement or experience of children, of disagreement with the official teaching of the Church, of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious or harmful activity.
- 18.2. 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.
- 18.3. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion.
- 18.4. 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. These issues will be followed up appropriately and sensitively outside of the classroom context in consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead if appropriate.

19.Supporting Children and Young People who are at Risk

- 19.1. Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place.
- 19.2. Effective RSE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships.
- 19.3. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue.
- 19.4. Teachers will need to be aware of the needs of their pupils and not let any fears and worries go unnoticed.
- 19.5. 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 College's Safeguarding Policy and immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.



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20. Confidentiality and Advice

- 20.1. All governors, all teachers, all support staff, all parents and all pupils must be made aware of this policy, particularly as it relates to issues of advice and confidentiality.
- 20.2. All lessons will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and sex, developing appropriate personal and social skills and becoming appreciative of the values and attitudes, which underpin the Christian understanding of what it means to be fully human.
- 20.3. Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents/guardians about the issues which are discussed in the programme.
- 20.4. Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties, in line with the Colleges pastoral support systems. Teachers should explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance.
- 20.5. Teachers will explain that in such circumstances they would have to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

21. Reviews of this policy

- 21.1. Any reviews of this policy will be done in consultation with staff, students and parents; taking into account their views before any changes are finalised.
- 21.2. The College Governing Body approve this policy following any review, following which it will be published on the College website.



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Annex A – Key Documents

The Department for Education Guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

Further information on the TenTen Resources programme for RSE can be found here:

<https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/>

The College PSHEE Whole School Overview and PSHEE Policy can be found here:

<https://www.sjcr.org.uk/434/information/parent-handbook-and-policies>

Information from the Catholic Education Service can be found here:

<https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/schools/relationship-sex-education>

Oak National Academy's 2025 RSHE resources on online safety, sexual ethics, and AI manipulation (available Autumn 2025).

Annex B – RSE through the Religious Studies and Science Curriculum

The Senior Science curriculum includes RSE aspects such as:

- The anatomy and physiology of male and female reproductive systems
- Discussions around what 'consent' is
- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and their prevention
- Artificial controls of fertility; including *In Vitro* fertilisation and contraception
- The facts about sexual intercourse and fertilisation
- Pregnancy and the development of the foetus
- Human life cycles, including changes during puberty, the menstrual cycle and the menopause

The Prep Science curriculum includes RSE aspects such as:

- Pre R and Reception: General hygiene and looking after our bodies
- Year 1: Looking after our bodies – references to good hygiene
- Year 2: Looking after our bodies – references to good hygiene and basic parts of the body.
- Year 3: Identifying body parts and how to look after our bodies (personal hygiene)
- Year 4: Continuation of personal hygiene and looking after our bodies: food and drink.
- Year 5: Life cycles – including human lifecycles; puberty
- Year 6: Continuation of lifecycles and puberty.

The Senior RE curriculum includes RSE/RHE aspects such as:

KEY STAGE THREE LINKS.
YEAR 7.

- 1 A student's place within their new community at the College and within the traditions that are fostered here.
- 2 Appropriate relationships to different peer groups and within the classroom.



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- 3 Relationships to communities and to God. The intrinsic worth of a person as an individual, with rights responsibilities and individual needs.
- 4 Spiritual relationships with Jesus and the divine.
- 5 Responsibilities within all relationships and practical ways in which we build relationships.
- 6 The traditional worldview of Catholicism concerning the family and the issues that relate to the family.

YEAR 8

- 1 Relationships through difficulties and conflicts.
- 2 Different relationships from around the world depending on the cultural context.
- 3 Relationships with God in this life and the next.
- 4 Dialogue and relationships between different Religious Perspectives.
- 5 Catholic and cultural attitudes towards abortion.
- 6 Catholic and Cultural attitudes towards euthanasia.
- 7 The Sacrament of Marriage and the different perspectives both Catholic and more general that exist with it.
- 8 The changing roles and relationships that exist with women and their place both within the church and society.
- 9 Relationships that are both mutual and serve others.
- 10 Enacting beliefs about relationships both personally, to a local community and on a wider level.

KEY STAGE FOUR. (YEARS 9 AND 10).

YEAR 9

- 1 Relationship to God as a Trinity.
- 2 Relationships to God in creation.
- 3 Value and meanings at the end of human life.
- 4 Catholic Social teaching and our relationships to all people's and communities.
- 5 Sources of personal and ethical decision making. How we personally come to decisions about our relationships and our actions.
- 6 Relationships to God and society from a different cultural perspective namely Judaism.
- 7 The value and intrinsic worth of a human being from Judaism.

YEAR 10

Religious teachings on relationships and families in the twenty-first century. There is a whole section in this part of the GCSE course that explicitly deals with relationships and sex education.



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- 1 The Roman Catholic sacrament of marriage, and the attitudes and opinions that exist towards it.
- 2 Sexual relationships from both a Catholic and secular perspective. Different types of sexual relationships, including homosexuality.
- 3 Families and their changing role in modern society.
- 4 Contraception from both a Catholic, Protestant and secular perspective. Types of contraception.
- 5 Divorce and remarriage from a Catholic perspective and building in counter arguments and ideas.
- 6 Equality of men and women in the family. Modern developments.
- 7 Gender prejudice and discrimination. Modern developments.

KEY STAGE 5 (YEAR 11, 12 and 13)

Key Stage five relationships between Relationships and Sex Education comes from discussions and taught material on Theology, Philosophy and Ethics. Often the traditional Catholic message is presented and then students have something to build on as they debate, discuss and then write things up.

Examples of discussion areas from this section can include;

- Is the traditional sacrament of marriage still relevant in today's world?
- Is the Catholic division of natural and artificial contraception a relic from another age.
- Is sex before or outside marriage morally wrong?
- Is it realistic to be married to the same person for the rest of your life?
- How relationships can be positive or negative.
- Is it ever acceptable to lie in a relationship?
- What is the difference between right and wrong in human sexual relationships.
- Should you always pick the person you are to be married to.
- How relationships can go wrong.
- What is the value to each human being and how should we decide this?
- Is gender fixed or chosen.
- How am I to live my life and by whose rules.

The Prep RE curriculum includes RSE/RHE aspects such as:

All year groups: learn about Christian marriage within our unit of work called Sacraments completed in the Summer Term.

All year groups: learn about how we need to look after ourselves and others in our unit of work called Creation completed in the Autumn Term.

Year 5&6: learn about fair and unfair distribution of money within the Catholic Social Teaching unit taught in the Autumn Term.

Year 4: learn about different vocations within the unit of work called Sacraments completed in the Summer Term.



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Annex C – Substantive changes in the DfE's Statutory RSE guidance (2026)

- Strengthened LGBT+ inclusion across all phases
- Factual teaching on gender identity permitted
- Expanded online safety curriculum: AI, deepfakes, misogyny, pornography
- Emphasis on sexual ethics and ethical decision-making
- No age thresholds for sensitive topics – content must be age/stage appropriate
- Formal review cycle extended to six years, with technical updates every three



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