



St. Bede's Catholic School and Byron 6th Form College

'Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world ablaze'



Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education & Health Education Policy

Policy reviewed: 01/10/2024

Date of next review: 01/10/2025

Secondary Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Policy Guidance.

1. This policy was developed in response to:

- Amoris Laetitia, On Love in the Family, Pope Francis, 2016
- Educational Guidance in Human Love: Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education.
- 1983 Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Guidance, DfE September 2020
- Research commentary: teaching about sex, sexual orientation, and gender reassignment, (Chris Jones, Ofsted's Director, July 2021)
- Children and Social Work Act, 2017
- Equality Act, 2010 and schools
- Not Yet Good Enough: Personal, social health and economic education in schools, Ofsted 2013
- Special Educational Needs and Disability code of practice: 0-25 years, updated 2020
- Life Lessons: PSHE and SRE in schools: Fifth Report, House of Commons Education Committee, 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (DfE, 2024)
- Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision, Green Paper, July 2018
- Review of Sexual abuse in schools and colleges, Ofsted June 2021

This policy should be considered alongside the following:

- E-safety/Online Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy (including child sexual exploitation)
- Equal Opportunities/ Inclusion Policy
- PSHE policy

2. The Consultation Process Has Involved:

- Student focus groups / school council
- Consultation and engagement with parents / carers
- Review of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum content with staff, students and parents/carers.
- Consultation with wider school community e.g., School Nurse, Education Development Service.
- Consultation, agreement and implementation of policy by school governors

3. What Is Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health 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 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 (both on and offline) 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

Statutory Curriculum Requirements,

We are legally required to teach those aspects of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. (There is also a separate requirement for maintained secondary schools to teach about HIV, AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. This does not apply to academies).

However, the reasons for our inclusion of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education go further.

4. 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 school. Our approach to Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education 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. Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education, 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, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education 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 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.

¹ Sex and Relationships Education Guidance, DfE, 2000

² Sex and Relationships Education Guidance, DfE, 2000

All Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education 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, and support will be provided to help pupils deal with different sets of values and personal attributes.

Values, Virtues and Personal Attributes.

Our programme enshrines Catholic values relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life. It also promotes those virtues and personal attributes which are essential in responding to 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; along with the importance of personal attributes such as kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice, underpinned by an understanding of the importance of self-respect and self-worth.

5. Aims of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education and The Mission Statement.

"The aim of RSE is to 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). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed".

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Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, our school aims state that we will endeavour to raise pupils' self-esteem, help them to grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of all persons and develop caring and sensitive attitudes and healthy positive friendships and relationships both on an offline. 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.

Objectives

To develop the following **attitudes and virtues**:

- reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility;
- respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others;

- joy in the goodness of the created world and their own bodily natures;
- responsibility for their own actions and 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; fidelity 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 positive and healthy friendships and loving, stable relationships including online, free from exploitation, abuse and bullying;
- managing emotions within relationships including on and offline, and when relationships break down, with confidence, 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;
- being patient, delaying gratification and learning to recognise the appropriate stages in the development of relationships, and how to love chastely;
- assessing risks and managing behaviours in order to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity.
- communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology/language for sex and relationship issues.

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, menstruation and menstrual wellbeing;
- the facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation;
- 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.

- the facts, and how the law applies to sexual relationships, enthusiastic consent, sexting and e-safety.
- the characteristics of healthy friendships and stable relationships which include being treated with respect
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves in a variety of situations including from exploitation, abuse and violence and unwanted/uninvited sexual experiences and sexually transmitted infections including HIV.
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity.
- have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want.
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and non-sexual relationships including online.
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex including violence in teenage relationships
- understand the true meaning of consent
- develop awareness of their evolving sexuality and understand human sexuality; gender identity, challenge sexism and prejudice, including sexual violence and harassment, which is inclusive of all young people
- where to get support and advice and where to access treatment

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Governor with specific responsibility for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education -

Member of the SLT with specific responsibility for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education – ***Lisa Ord***

Governors

- Draw up the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education policy, in consultation with parents and teachers;
- Ensure that the policy is available to parents;
- Ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g., SEN, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs;
- Ensure that parents 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 Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education within PSHE.

Head teacher

The Head teacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, the Diocesan Schools' Service and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

PSHE/Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Co-ordinator

The co-ordinator with the head teacher 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 Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education and the provision of in-service training. *(They may be supported by the curriculum deputy and the member of staff with responsibility for child protection).*

All Staff

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education is a whole school issue. 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 Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education. All staff have been included in the development of this policy and all staff should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them.

7. Organisation and Content of Relationship and Sex Education

St Bede's specifically delivers Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education through its PSHE Programme, RE and Science lessons at KS3, and KS4. Our curriculum includes:

<u>Year Group.</u>	Content
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils will learn that they are a completely unique person, created and loved by God• Pupils will learn that puberty involves physical, emotional and sexual development.• Pupils will learn about self-esteem: what contributes to it, how it can affect their lives and how to increase it.• Pupils will learn about sexual intercourse as more than just a physical act.• Pupils will learn about different types of friendship and family structure and discuss how better to manage their behaviour through consideration of thoughts, feelings and actions.• Pupils will learn that they have online 'lives' that they need to take steps to safeguard, just as they do in real life.• Pupils will learn the effects of their actions on others and understand the concept of social responsibility.
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils will learn what makes them scientifically unique, and that our deepest need is to love and be loved.• Pupils will learn about some of the ways in which people may choose to articulate their identity, including gender and sexual identity.• Pupils will learn that an increase in hormone production during puberty leads to physical and psychological changes, including sexual attraction, and methods for managing the feelings involved with these.• Pupils will learn what happens during the different stages of pregnancy, the importance of pre-natal care and the emotional, real-life impact of pregnancies carried to full term and otherwise.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will learn the meaning of terms such as 'prejudice', 'discrimination', 'protected characteristics', 'tolerance', 'kindness' and 'forgiveness' and consider what these look like in real terms. • Pupils will learn about the consequences of sharing images of a sexual nature, how to resist pressure to do this, and the importance of setting rules to keep themselves safe online. • Pupils will learn from history that prejudice can grow into discrimination without the courage of upstanders, and that we all can all, through our language and behaviour, play a part in dismantling prejudice at its root.
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will consider their desire to love and be loved, and learn about God's plan for romantic love, sexual attraction and intimacy. • Pupils will learn about objectification and consider the negative impact of casual sex and pornography. • Pupils will learn about the benefits of delaying sexual intimacy. • Pupils will learn about methods for managing conception. • Pupils will learn about different types of committed relationships and consider what relationships they would like in the future. • Pupils will learn that consent is not just gaining permission for something but choosing to honour and respect one another as persons with innate dignity. • Pupils will learn about physical consent, sexual exploitation and human rights.
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will learn about the objective reality of sex, and how this might impact people's decisions around relationships, including their own hopes and wishes for the future. • Pupils will learn about different experiences of body shame, explore notions of 'dignity' and 'modesty' in relation to the body and consider that our bodies are good and help make us unique. • Pupils will learn the meaning of the terms 'beliefs', 'values' and 'attitudes', how crucial they are in shaping our choices and that we should interrogate them regularly to ensure we are living the way we intend. • Pupils will learn about the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child and how this impacts on legal Parental Responsibility, as well as considering the emotional and practical commitment that being a parent entails. • Pupils will learn about the stages of life in the womb, abortion methods and legality, and sex as so often being divorced from the possibility of parenthood. • Pupils will learn about the four main types of abuse, how to look out for danger signs, resist pressure, access support and know that abuse is never the victim's fault. • Pupils will learn with compassion about FGM, human trafficking, honour-based violence and about Pope Francis' concept of 'an integral ecology'. Pupils will learn that how they act on their beliefs, values and attitudes will have an effect on the world around them, for good or bad.

11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will consider how formative experiences can shape a person's beliefs, values and attitudes • Pupils will consider how addiction can affect a person's life. Statistics about drugs and addiction Strategies to resist/overcome the pull of short-term highs. • Pupils will consider how pressure, stress and anxiety can contribute to poor emotional health. That poor emotional health can manifest in different ways, including eating disorders. The importance of talking about difficulties, their own and those of others. How reducing self-criticism and practicing gratitude can improve mental and emotional well-being. • Pupils will consider the counter-cultural idea of saving sex for marriage. Learn more about fertility and contraception. Learn about Natural Family Planning as a method of managing fertility. • Pupils will consider that sexual desire is a positive thing that draws us to truth and beauty. Facts and figures about the porn industry; that amongst many other things, porn gives unrealistic expectations and unhealthy sex education, harms relationships by fostering selfishness and self-satisfaction and can be highly addictive. • Pupils will consider how upbringing and peer pressure might have an impact on our choices. Facts and figures about sexually transmitted infections, and the responsibility of getting tested. The emotional/psychological impacts of (regularly) engaging in casual sex. • Pupils will consider the many forms of coercive control. Why victims might find it hard to leave abusive relationships. Victim-blaming and other societal attitudes towards misogyny and sexual violence. The qualities of a truly respectful, healthy relationship. Support avenues available to pupils.
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Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lays with the science, religious education, physical education, and PSHE staff.

However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education 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.

External Visitors

Our school will often call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher led sessions. It is important that any external visitor is clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in school delivering a session. Any visitor must adhere to our code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools'.³ Health professionals should follow the school'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.

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education lessons are set within the wider context of the PSHE curriculum and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although the physical aspects of puberty, menstruation and menstrual wellbeing and reproduction are also included. The Science

³ Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools, Catholic Education Service for England and Wales, 2011.

National Curriculum is delivered by staff in the science department. These lessons are more concerned with the physical aspects of development and reproduction, although the importance of relationships is not forgotten. Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education will be representative and inclusive of LGBT young people.

The PSHE Programme and Science National Curriculum is taught in every year.

Any Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons a group agreement, formerly known as ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson.

When students ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the group agreement established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

More expert or specialist teachers and other professionals may support staff who are uncomfortable with teaching certain aspects of the curriculum. Support and professional development will be provided for these staff, so that they can develop the confidence in delivering the whole of the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education programme.

Assessment is carried out, where appropriate, for example at the start and end of every module and involves teacher, student and peer assessment of knowledge and understanding, interpersonal skills, and attitudes.

Balanced Curriculum

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing a Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (in secondary schools/academies relating to forced-marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion, the age of consent 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 school'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.

8. Inclusion

We will ensure Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education 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. 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. We will address questions sensitively and appropriately. (In looking at these questions, it is important to draw links to the school's inclusion policy). We will ensure that relationships and sex education is relevant to all pupils whatever their developing identity and sexuality.

Pupils 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 pupils.

The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all 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. Parents/carers and the wider community

Here at St Bede's, we recognise that parents (and other carers who stand in their place) are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children. Therefore, the school will support parents and carers by providing material to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help parents/carers to find out more. Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning.

Parents must be consulted before this policy is ratified by the governors. They will be consulted at every stage of the development of the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education programme, as well as during the process of monitoring, review and evaluation. They will be able to view the resources used by the school in the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education programme. Our aim is that, at the end of the consultation process, every parent and carer will have full confidence in the school's Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education programme to meet their child's needs. This policy and information on what will be taught and when will be freely available on our school website for you to access.

10. Right to Withdraw Students from Relationships and Sex Education. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some parts of sex education, (not relationship education), delivered as part of statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education. It is good practice for the head teacher to discuss the request and as appropriate, with the child to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum, the benefits of receiving the important information, and possible detrimental effects that the withdrawal might have. Good practice advises that the head teacher document this process to ensure a record is kept.

In exceptional circumstances for example when they propose to educate their child at home, the school will respect the parent's request, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point the student can choose to attend Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education. Their SEND should not be a

consideration for the head teacher to grant a parental request, apart from in exceptional circumstances. Parents are welcome to review any RSHE resources the school uses.

Relationship to other policies and curriculum subjects

This Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHE framework. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents (for example, Bullying policy, Safeguarding Policy etc)

Learning about Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education in PSHE classes will link to/complement learning in those areas identified in the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education audit.

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.

11. Safeguarding, reports of abuse and confidentiality

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education can take place. They 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. All staff involved in the delivery of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education will have received safeguarding training and a copy of the school's safeguarding policy, which can be found on the school website at: <https://www.st-bedes.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Safeguarding-and-child-protection-policy-2024-2025.pdf>

Controversial or Sensitive issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education. 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. The governors believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion.

Confidentiality and Advice

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.

All lessons, especially those in the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education programme, 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.

Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in the programme. Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties, in line with the school's pastoral care policy. Teachers should explain to pupils 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., parents, head teacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken. This should be made clear when forming the class Group Agreement and all classrooms will display information regarding the access to the safeguarding lead.

Supporting children and young people who are at risk.

Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education takes place. Effective Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education 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 pupils 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 school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

Young People under the age of 13 years

A child under 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sexual activity. Any offence under The Sexual Offences Act 2003 involving a child under 13 is very serious and should be taken to indicate a risk of significant harm to the child. Cases involving under 13's should always be discussed with the nominated child protection lead.

Under the Sexual Offences Act, penetrative sex with a child under the age of 13 is classed as rape. Therefore, in all cases where the sexually active young person is under 13, a referral should be made to First Contact identifying the young person, and the sexual partner if known. Following this, a Strategy Meeting or discussion will be held. The meeting will involve a Team Manager, Social Worker, Police, Health Worker, Education and Welfare and other relevant agencies, to discuss appropriate next steps.

Where the allegation concerns penetrative sex, or other intimate sexual activity occurs, there would always be reasonable cause to suspect that a child, whether girl or boy, is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. All cases involving under 13's should be fully documented and reported.

Young people between 13 – 16 years

Sexual Activity with a young person in this age group is a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. The Act reinforces that whilst mutually agreed, non-exploitive, non-coercive sexual activity between teenagers does take place and that often no harm comes

from it, the legal age of consent remains 16. This acknowledges that this group of young people is still vulnerable, even when they do not view themselves as such. Recent changes in law around consent places the emphasis on proving that consent is secured by the person initiating sex, and not the assumption that it has been obtained from the other person. This is based on them being free, able, has capacity to give consent, and that on each occasion it is negotiated and agreed.

Consideration should be given in every case of sexual activity involving 13–15-year-olds as to whether a discussion with other agencies and whether a referral should be made to Safeguarding and Specialist Services. Cases of concern should be discussed with the nominated child protection lead and subsequently with other agencies as required.

When confidentiality needs to be preserved a discussion can still take place as long as it does not identify the child (directly or indirectly).

Where there is a reasonable cause to suspect that significant harm to a child has occurred/might occur, there should be a presumption that the case is reported to Safeguarding and Specialist Service.

All cases should be carefully documented including when a decision is taken not to share information.

Health professionals in school are bound by their codes of conduct but have a duty to share information with relevant others, if they believe that a child is suffering abuse. The school's safeguarding policy⁴ requires all staff and volunteers to fully comply with the school's policies and procedures, which includes informing the designated person of any concerns.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation of Relationship and Sex Education

It is the responsibility of the PSHE Co-ordinator to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation of PSHE, in the context of the overall school plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The PSHE programme will be treated as a subject department in this exercise, under which all departments undertake yearly self-evaluation and a twice-yearly monitoring and evaluation exercise led by the School Leadership Team.

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Co-ordinator 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. The programme will be evaluated biannually by means of questionnaires / response sheets/needs assessment given to pupils, and / or by discussion with pupils, staff and parents. 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.

⁴ <https://www.st-bedes.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Safeguarding-and-child-protection-policy-2024-2025.pdf>

The Governors Curriculum Staffing and Resources Committee is responsible for overseeing, reviewing and organising the revision of the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and health Education Policy.

Ofsted is required to evaluate and report personal development, behaviour, and welfare as well as spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of students. This may include evaluating and commenting on the school's

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Policy, curriculum, staff development and quality of provision.