

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

A Guide for Parents and Carers

Supporting our consultation on the Relationships and Sex Education curriculum

Dear Parents and Carers,

At Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ, we believe that parents are the first and most important educators of their children. Our role is to work in partnership with families to support every young person in growing into confident, compassionate and responsible adults.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is an important part of this partnership. It helps young people develop the knowledge, skills and values they need to build healthy relationships, make informed decisions, care for their physical and emotional wellbeing and stay safe in an increasingly complex world.

As a Catholic school, our approach is rooted in the belief that every person is created in the image and likeness of God and possesses inherent dignity and worth reflecting Gospel values and Catholic Social Teachings. Our curriculum reflects the teachings of the Catholic Church whilst also fulfilling the statutory requirements set by the Department for Education.

We value the views of parents and carers and are committed to ensuring that our curriculum is open, transparent and responsive to the needs of our community. This guide explains what pupils learn, why these topics are taught and how learning develops throughout Years 7 to 11.

Why do we teach Relationships and Sex Education?

Relationships and Sex Education is about far more than sex. It equips young people with the knowledge, understanding and values they need to build healthy relationships, care for themselves and others, and make informed decisions throughout their lives.

Our curriculum helps pupils to:

- develop healthy, respectful and positive relationships;
- understand themselves and the changes they experience as they grow up;
- recognise the dignity and value of every person;
- promote positive physical and mental wellbeing;
- recognise abuse, exploitation and unhealthy relationships;
- stay safe both online and offline;
- understand where and how to seek help when needed;
- prepare for adult life with confidence and responsibility.

Our Catholic Approach

Relationships and Sex Education encourages pupils to develop the virtues that underpin healthy relationships, including:

- respect
- kindness
- honesty
- compassion
- responsibility
- forgiveness
- integrity
- courage

The curriculum recognises the importance of marriage and family life within Catholic teaching whilst preparing pupils to live respectfully and responsibly within modern British society. Pupils are encouraged to value themselves and others, celebrate diversity, challenge discrimination and contribute positively to their communities.

How is Relationships and Sex Education taught?

Relationships and Sex Education is delivered through a planned programme of learning across Years 7 to 11.

The curriculum is based on the **Ten:Ten Life to the Full** programme, which has been developed specifically for Catholic schools and approved by the Catholic Education Service. The programme is enhanced by additional lessons developed by Maria Fidelis to ensure that all requirements of the Department for Education's 2026 Relationships, Sex and Health Education guidance are fully met, particularly in relation to safeguarding and emerging online risks. This programme will be monitored by the RSE co-ordinator, Deputy Head teacher in charge of pastoral and the Headmaster.

Learning takes place through:

- Religious Education
- PSHE
- Science
- Tutor Time
- Assemblies
- Pastoral programmes
- Carefully selected external speakers where appropriate

Lessons are taught by trained staff in a safe, respectful and age-appropriate environment where pupils are encouraged to ask questions, think critically and reflect upon the values that underpin healthy relationships.

Understanding the Curriculum

To help parents understand the purpose of each lesson, we have grouped learning into four curriculum areas.

Curriculum Area	Purpose
● Relationships Education	Developing healthy friendships, respectful relationships, communication skills, family life and understanding the dignity of every person.
● Health Education	Physical and mental health, puberty, emotional wellbeing, healthy lifestyles and preparing for adulthood.
● Sex Education	Human reproduction, fertility, contraception and sexual health. Parents have the right to request withdrawal from these lessons (except where content forms part of the National Curriculum for Science).
● Safeguarding	Helping pupils recognise abuse, exploitation, unhealthy relationships and online risks, understand the law and know how to seek help. These lessons form an important part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

What Will My Child Learn Each Year?

The tables below summarise the key learning for each year group.

Year 7 – Building Positive Relationships

Overall focus: Settling into secondary school, developing positive friendships and understanding the physical and emotional changes of adolescence.

Topic	What pupils will learn	Why do we teach this?	Curriculum Area	Ten:Ten Resource	Right to Withdraw?
Human Dignity and Community	Every person is created in the image of God and deserves dignity, respect and compassion.	To establish the Catholic values that underpin the whole curriculum.	● Relationships Education	Life to the Full Introduction	No
Transition to Secondary School	Resilience, independence, organisation and belonging.	To support pupils in making a successful transition to secondary school.	● Health Education	Transition resources	No
Healthy Friendships	Trust, kindness, inclusion, communication and resolving conflict positively.	Healthy friendships are the foundation of wellbeing and positive relationships.	● Relationships Education	Relationships Unit	No
Respect and Inclusion	Bullying, discrimination, prejudice and respecting differences.	To create an inclusive community where everyone feels safe and valued.	● Relationships Education	Relationships Unit	No
Puberty	Physical and emotional changes during adolescence, hygiene and body confidence.	To prepare pupils for the changes they experience during puberty.	● Health Education (contains some Sex Education)	7.2 Changing Bodies	No
Human Reproduction	How human life begins through conception and pregnancy, presented within Catholic teaching.	To provide accurate scientific knowledge whilst promoting respect for human life.	● Sex Education	7.4 Where We Come From	Yes*
Mental Wellbeing	Managing emotions, developing self-esteem and accessing support.	To promote resilience and positive mental health.	● Health Education	Wellbeing Units	No
Online Safety	Digital footprints, privacy, social media and staying safe online.	To help pupils use technology safely and responsibly.	● Safeguarding	Digital Relationships	No

Year 8 – Identity and Healthy Relationships

Overall focus: Developing confidence, understanding identity and building respectful relationships.

Topic	What pupils will learn	Why do we teach this?	Curriculum Area	Ten:Ten Resource	Right to Withdraw?
Identity and Self-Worth	Self-esteem, uniqueness and recognising individual strengths.	To help pupils develop confidence and resilience.	● Health Education	Identity Units	No
Healthy Relationships	Communication, trust, empathy and healthy boundaries.	To help pupils recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships.	● Relationships Education	Relationships Units	No
Sexual Feelings	Understanding developing feelings and managing them responsibly.	To support emotional development within a Catholic understanding of relationships.	● Sex Education	8.3 Sexual Feelings	Yes*
Before I Was Born	Pregnancy, foetal development and the beginning of life.	To deepen pupils' understanding of human development and the dignity of life.	● Sex Education	8.4 Before I Was Born	Yes*
Equality and Diversity	Respecting difference, challenging stereotypes and understanding protected characteristics.	To promote inclusion, equality and respect for all.	● Relationships Education	8.7 Wider World	No
Sharing Images Safely	Risks associated with sharing images, sexting and online behaviour.	To protect pupils from online harm and exploitation.	● Safeguarding	8.6 Think Before You Share	No
Mental Health	Stress, anxiety, emotional wellbeing and seeking support.	To encourage resilience and early help-seeking.	● Health Education	Wellbeing Units	No

Year 9 – Respect, Responsibility and Keeping Safe

Overall focus: Developing mature relationships and making informed decisions.

Topic	What pupils will learn	Why do we teach this?	Curriculum Area	Ten:Ten Resource	Right to Withdraw?
Healthy Romantic Relationships	Respect, trust, commitment and healthy relationship qualities.	To prepare pupils for respectful and healthy relationships.	● Relationships Education	9.1 The Search for Love	No
Love, Sex and Responsibility	Catholic teaching on love, intimacy and responsibility.	To encourage informed and responsible decision-making.	● Sex Education	9.2 Love People, Use Things	Yes*
Sexual Decision-Making	Managing sexual feelings and exercising self-control.	To encourage thoughtful, responsible choices.	● Sex Education	9.3 In Control of My Choices	Yes*
Fertility and Contraception	Fertility, conception and methods of contraception.	To provide accurate statutory Sex Education.	● Sex Education	9.4 Fertility and Contraception	Yes*
Consent	Consent, the law, personal boundaries and respectful relationships.	To help pupils recognise abuse, coercion and healthy relationships.	● Safeguarding	9.5B Understanding Consent	No
Online Exploitation	Sextortion, online grooming and manipulation.	To help pupils recognise online abuse and seek help.	● Safeguarding	9.6 Safe and Smart Online	No
Sexual Violence	Sexual assault, exploitation, rape and sources of support.	To protect pupils and help them understand the law.	● Safeguarding	9.7 Human Rights – And Wrongs	No

Year 10 – Preparing for Adult Life

Overall focus: Healthy adult relationships, safeguarding and life beyond school.

Topic	What pupils will learn	Why do we teach this?	Curriculum Area	Ten:Ten Resource	Right to Withdraw?
Authentic Freedom	Catholic teaching on relationships, love, intimacy and commitment.	To help pupils make mature, informed and responsible choices.	● Sex Education	10.1 Authentic Freedom	Yes*
Pregnancy and Abortion	Pregnancy, abortion and the dignity of human life.	To explore ethical issues through Catholic teaching.	● Sex Education	10.5A Pregnancy and Abortion	Yes*
Abuse	Grooming, coercive control, stalking and recognising abuse.	To help pupils recognise unhealthy relationships and access support.	● Safeguarding	10.5B Abuse	No
AI and Online Influences	Deepfakes, AI, online misogyny, influencers and online grooming.	To prepare pupils for emerging online safeguarding risks.	● Safeguarding	10.6 Online Influences	No
Harmful Practices	Honour-based abuse, FGM and human trafficking.	To help pupils recognise serious safeguarding risks and understand the law.	● Safeguarding	10.7 Solidarity	No
Marriage and Family Life	Marriage, parenting and stable family relationships.	To prepare pupils for healthy adult relationships and family life.	● Relationships Education	Family Life Units	No

Year 11 – Preparing for Adult Relationships

Overall focus: Consolidating learning and preparing for adulthood.

Topic	What pupils will learn	Why do we teach this?	Curriculum Area	Ten:Ten Resource	Right to Withdraw?
Family Planning	Fertility, contraception and natural family planning.	To prepare pupils for informed adult decision-making.	● Sex Education	11.4 Family Planning and Fertility	Yes*
Sexual Health	Sexually transmitted infections, prevention, testing and support services.	To promote lifelong health and wellbeing.	● Health Education	11.5A Sexual Health	No
Pornography	Risks of pornography, healthy relationships and unrealistic expectations.	To help pupils recognise harmful online content and seek help if needed.	● Safeguarding	11.5B Pornography	No
Coercive Control	Coercive control, sexual violence and recognising abusive relationships.	To prepare pupils for healthy adult relationships and help them recognise abuse.	● Safeguarding	11.5C Coercive Control	No
Preparing for Adult Life	Accessing healthcare, healthy relationships, independent living and future responsibilities.	To support pupils as they move into post-16 education, employment and adulthood.	● Relationships & Health Education	Life to the Full Year 11	No

Why Do We Teach Some Sensitive Topics?

As children grow into young adults, they face an increasingly complex world. Relationships and Sex Education helps pupils develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to build healthy relationships, recognise risks and make informed decisions.

Some topics may appear sensitive. However, these are included because schools have a statutory responsibility to safeguard children and prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teaching is always age-appropriate, carefully planned and delivered within the context of our Catholic ethos.

The table below explains why these topics form part of the curriculum.

Topic	Why do we teach this?	Curriculum Area
Consent	To help pupils understand healthy relationships, respect personal boundaries, recognise coercion and understand the law.	● Safeguarding
Contraception	To provide accurate knowledge about fertility and pregnancy, enabling pupils to make informed and responsible decisions in later life.	● Sex Education
Sexual Health	To promote lifelong health, reduce stigma and ensure pupils know how to access support and healthcare.	● Health Education
Pornography	To help pupils recognise unrealistic and harmful portrayals of relationships and understand the risks associated with online pornography.	● Safeguarding
Sextortion	To help pupils recognise online blackmail and know how to seek help if they or someone they know is affected.	● Safeguarding
Online Grooming	To help pupils recognise manipulation, exploitation and unsafe online behaviours.	● Safeguarding
Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Deepfakes	To prepare pupils for emerging online risks, including fake images, misinformation and image-based abuse.	● Safeguarding
Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control	To help pupils recognise unhealthy and abusive behaviours and understand where support is available.	● Safeguarding
Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)	To promote respect, equality and challenge harmful attitudes, helping pupils build healthy, respectful relationships.	● Safeguarding
Honour-Based Abuse and Forced Marriage	To ensure pupils understand that these practices are illegal, recognise warning signs and know how to seek help.	● Safeguarding
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	To raise awareness of a serious safeguarding issue and ensure pupils understand that FGM is illegal and harmful.	● Safeguarding
Equality and Diversity	To promote respect for all people, challenge discrimination and help pupils understand their rights and responsibilities.	● Relationships Education

How Are These Topics Taught?

Sensitive topics are taught in a way that is:

- **Age-appropriate and SEND appropriate** – content is carefully matched to pupils' maturity and stage of development.
- **Rooted in our Catholic ethos** – every lesson reflects the dignity of the human person, the importance of respectful relationships and Gospel values.
- **Factually accurate** – pupils receive clear, evidence-informed information that meets statutory requirements.
- **Sensitive and respectful** – teachers create a safe environment where pupils can ask questions and reflect thoughtfully.
- **Safeguarding focused** – lessons help pupils recognise abuse, understand how to keep themselves safe and know where to seek help.

Where appropriate, pupils are reminded that they can speak to a trusted member of staff if they have any concerns or questions following a lesson.

Working in Partnership with Parents

We recognise that parents and carers are the first and most important educators of their children. Our aim is to work in partnership with families by providing a curriculum that is transparent, age-appropriate and rooted in our shared commitment to helping young people flourish.

We are committed to:

- informing parents about what will be taught;
- listening carefully to parental feedback;
- making curriculum information and resources available upon request;
- respecting the diversity of views within our school community;
- ensuring that teaching remains faithful to our Catholic ethos while fulfilling statutory responsibilities.

We encourage parents to continue conversations at home, as discussing relationships, wellbeing and growing up within families plays an important role in supporting young people's development.

A note about safeguarding

Some topics, such as consent, online exploitation, pornography, coercive control, deepfakes, honour-based abuse and female genital mutilation (FGM), may appear sensitive. They are included because schools have a statutory duty to help young people recognise abuse, understand the law, stay safe and know where to seek help. These topics are taught in an age-appropriate way, within the context of our Catholic ethos and with the welfare of pupils at the heart of every lesson.

*** Right to withdraw:** Parents may request that their child is withdrawn from those elements of **Sex Education** identified by the school, in line with statutory guidance. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education, Health Education, National Curriculum Science or safeguarding content that the school considers essential for keeping pupils safe.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do schools teach Relationships and Sex Education?

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) helps young people develop the knowledge, skills and values they need to build healthy relationships, care for their physical and mental wellbeing, recognise abuse, stay safe and prepare for adult life. It is a statutory part of the curriculum for all secondary schools in England.

How does RSE reflect the Catholic ethos of Maria Fidelis?

Our curriculum is rooted in the Catholic belief that every person is created in the image and likeness of God and possesses inherent dignity and worth.

Throughout the curriculum, pupils are encouraged to develop virtues such as respect, compassion, honesty, responsibility and forgiveness. Relationships are explored within the context of Gospel values, Catholic Social Teaching and the Church's understanding of human dignity, marriage and family life, whilst also preparing pupils to live respectfully within modern British society.

What resources does the school use?

Maria Fidelis uses the **Ten:Ten Life to the Full** programme as the foundation of its Relationships and Sex Education curriculum.

This programme has been developed specifically for Catholic schools and has been approved by the Catholic Education Service.

The school also teaches additional lessons to ensure the curriculum fully reflects the latest Department for Education guidance, particularly in relation to safeguarding and emerging online risks.

Why do pupils learn about consent?

Consent is fundamental to healthy, respectful relationships.

Teaching pupils about consent helps them to:

- understand personal boundaries;
- recognise coercion and abuse;
- understand the law;
- build respectful relationships;
- know how to seek help if they are worried.

Consent is taught as part of our safeguarding curriculum and helps keep young people safe.

Why do pupils learn about pornography?

Many young people encounter pornography online, often unintentionally.

Our curriculum helps pupils understand:

- that pornography often presents unrealistic and unhealthy portrayals of relationships;
- the potential impact on mental wellbeing and relationships;
- the importance of respect, consent and dignity;
- where to seek help if they encounter upsetting material online.

This is taught as part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

Why do pupils learn about AI, deepfakes and online safety?

Technology is changing rapidly, and young people increasingly encounter risks associated with artificial intelligence, manipulated images and online misinformation.

Lessons help pupils to:

- recognise online risks;
- understand image-based abuse;
- use technology responsibly;
- know how to report concerns;
- stay safe online.

Why are topics such as domestic abuse, coercive control and violence against women and girls included?

These topics form part of the school's safeguarding curriculum. They help pupils:

- recognise abusive behaviours;
- understand that abuse is never acceptable;
- challenge harmful attitudes and stereotypes;
- know how to seek help for themselves or others.

Teaching these topics contributes to creating a culture of respect, equality and healthy relationships.

Can I withdraw my child from Relationships and Sex Education?

Parents have the legal right to request that their child is withdrawn from some or all of the **Sex Education** elements of the curriculum.

There is **no right to withdraw** from:

- Relationships Education;
- Health Education;
- National Curriculum Science;
- safeguarding content that the school considers essential to keeping pupils safe.

If you are considering requesting withdrawal, we encourage you to discuss this with the school so we can explain the curriculum and answer any questions.

How are sensitive topics taught?

Sensitive topics are always taught:

- in an age-appropriate way;
- within the context of our Catholic ethos;
- by trained members of staff;
- using high-quality resources;
- in a safe and respectful learning environment.

Teachers establish clear ground rules to ensure pupils feel comfortable asking questions and discussing issues respectfully.

How can I support my child?

Parents and carers play the most important role in helping children develop healthy attitudes towards relationships and wellbeing.

You can support your child by:

- talking openly about relationships and growing up;
- encouraging respectful behaviour;
- discussing online safety;
- answering questions honestly and appropriately;
- contacting the school if you would like further advice or support.

Working together helps ensure that young people receive consistent messages both at home and at school.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

If you would like further information about the Relationships and Sex Education curriculum, or wish to discuss any aspect of the programme, please contact:

Deputy Headteacher: David McLoughlin

Email: dmcloughlin@mariafidelis.camden.sch.uk

We welcome your feedback and look forward to working in partnership with you to support the wellbeing and development of every pupil.

Your Views Matter

At Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ, we value the views of parents and carers. As the first educators of your children, your feedback is an important part of reviewing and developing our Relationships and Sex Education curriculum.

The consultation will remain open until 01 September 2026.

Following the consultation:

- all responses will be reviewed by the school;
- feedback will be shared with Governors;
- amendments will be made where appropriate;
- the final Relationships and Sex Education Policy will be published on the school website.

We encourage every parent and carer to complete the questionnaire. Your views will help ensure that our curriculum continues to reflect our Catholic ethos, meets statutory requirements and supports the wellbeing and safety of all students.

Please complete the consultation by scanning the QR code below or by visiting:

<https://forms.gle/q1qb57bpnhxPhsuH9>

