



Maria Fidelis
Catholic School FCJ

Relationships and Sex Education Policy	
Committee	Curriculum & Academic Standards
Author	D.McLoughlin
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The FCJ Schools' Vision

Our vision is that FCJ schools are communities of personal and academic excellence.

Strong in companionship, the unique giftedness of every person in these faith communities is recognised, nourished and celebrated.

Our hope and expectation is that, through God's grace working in us all, each young person grows into their best self, with zest for life and the generosity and confidence to use their talents and gifts in the service of others.

Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ

Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Vision Statement

The vision for Maria Fidelis is to create an inclusive school equipped for the 21st Century which will enable all young people to maximise their potential in order that they leave school as educated, confident and courageous Catholics, prepared to challenge injustice and care enough to 'live life to the full'.

Dissemination

The draft policy will be made available to all members of the Governing Body, and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the document will be available to all parents through the school's prospectus and a copy is available in the school office. Details of the content of the RSE curriculum will also be published on the school's web site.

Defining Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)

The Department for Education defines Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) as learning about healthy relationships, respect, intimacy, sex, health and wellbeing, enabling pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and values necessary to build positive relationships and make informed decisions throughout life.

Statutory Curriculum Requirements

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance **Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2026)** and reflects the school's duties under current legislation and national guidance.

The Relationships and Sex Education curriculum at Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ is informed by:

- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory Guidance (Department for Education, 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education) – current edition
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government) – current edition
- The Children Act 1989 and The Children Act 2004
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Online Safety Act 2023
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Education Act 1996 and subsequent amendments
- The Public Sector Equality Duty
- Guidance from the Catholic Education Service (CES) and the Diocese of Westminster

The school is legally required to teach Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education in accordance with statutory guidance, alongside those aspects of human development and reproduction contained within the National Curriculum for Science.

The school recognises that Relationships and Sex Education is an integral part of its safeguarding responsibilities. Through a carefully planned and age-appropriate curriculum, pupils are supported to develop the knowledge, understanding, values and skills necessary to build healthy relationships, recognise abuse and exploitation, understand consent, stay safe online,

promote positive mental wellbeing, seek support when needed, and make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.

In accordance with statutory guidance, parents retain the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of statutory Relationships and Sex Education, other than those elements which form part of the National Curriculum for Science or the statutory Relationships Education curriculum.

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 RSE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals.

At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation. As a consequence of the Christian belief that we are made in the image and likeness of God, gender and sexuality are seen as God's gift, reflect God's beauty, and share in the divine creativity. RSE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationship as it is there that sexuality grows and develops.

Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales and as advocated by the DfE, RSE will be firmly embedded in the PSHE framework as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of students. It is centred on Christ's vision of being human as good news and will be positive and prudent, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.

All RSE will be in accordance with the Church's moral teaching. It will emphasise the central importance of marriage and the family whilst acknowledging that all students have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from and support will be provided to help students deal with different sets of values.

The school recognises that Relationships and Sex Education is an essential part of safeguarding. Through a carefully sequenced curriculum, pupils will develop the knowledge, understanding and confidence to build healthy relationships, recognise abuse, understand consent, stay safe online, seek support when needed and make informed decisions that promote their physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Values and Virtues

Our programme enshrines Catholic values relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life. It also promotes those virtues which are essential in responding to the God's call to love others with a proper respect for their dignity and the dignity of the human body. The following virtues will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

Aim of RSE and the Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, our 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. 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”¹ which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

Objectives

At Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ, Relationships and Sex Education seeks to enable all pupils to flourish as unique individuals created in the image and likeness of God. Our curriculum is designed to support pupils in developing the knowledge, understanding, skills and virtues required to build positive relationships, make informed decisions and lead healthy, safe and fulfilling lives.

To develop the following attitudes and virtues:

- respect for the dignity, worth and uniqueness of every person;
- reverence for the gift of human life, sexuality and relationships;
- compassion, kindness, integrity, honesty and empathy towards others;
- an understanding of the importance of stable, loving and respectful relationships;
- responsibility for personal choices and recognition of their impact on others;
- resilience, courage and confidence to challenge prejudice, discrimination and injustice;
- respect for diversity whilst understanding the teachings and values of the Catholic Church;
- appreciation of the importance of family life and supportive relationships;
- an awareness of personal responsibility in promoting equality, inclusion and mutual respect.

To develop the following personal and social skills:

- developing healthy, respectful and positive relationships based upon trust, mutual respect and consent;
- recognising healthy and unhealthy relationships, including coercive, controlling or abusive behaviours;
- communicating effectively, resolving conflict positively and maintaining appropriate personal boundaries;
- recognising, reporting and responding appropriately to bullying, harassment, discrimination and exploitation, both offline and online;
- understanding and managing emotions with increasing independence, resilience and self-awareness;
- making informed decisions about personal health, wellbeing and relationships;
- developing digital resilience and understanding how to stay safe online, including recognising online manipulation, misinformation, sextortion, deepfakes and image-based abuse;
- assessing and managing risk, resisting inappropriate pressure and knowing when and how to seek support;
- promoting positive mental health, recognising signs of emotional distress and understanding how to access appropriate support for themselves or others;
- becoming responsible, respectful and active citizens who contribute positively to their communities.

To know and understand:

- the Church's teaching on relationships, marriage, family life and the dignity of the human person;
- the physical, emotional, psychological and social changes associated with puberty and adolescence;

- the characteristics of healthy, respectful and loving relationships, including the principles of consent and personal boundaries;
- the nature and impact of coercive control, domestic abuse, sexual harassment, exploitation and violence, including violence against women and girls;
- how to recognise and respond safely to online risks, including grooming, pornography, image sharing, artificial intelligence (AI), deepfakes, online influencers, algorithms and digital manipulation;
- the importance of maintaining good physical and mental health, developing resilience and recognising when professional support should be sought;
- the facts about human reproduction, fertility, contraception, sexually transmitted infections and sexual health, taught in accordance with statutory guidance and the Catholic ethos of the school;
- the legal rights, responsibilities and protections relating to relationships, consent, equality, safeguarding and online safety;
- where and how to access reliable information, advice and support, both within school and from external agencies, when facing concerns relating to relationships, health or personal safety.

Inclusion and Equality

At Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ, we believe that every pupil is uniquely created in the image and likeness of God and is entitled to an education which enables them to flourish spiritually, academically, emotionally and socially. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) will be delivered in a manner that reflects the dignity of every individual and promotes an inclusive, respectful and safe learning environment.

The school is committed to ensuring that the RSE curriculum is accessible to all pupils, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude, background or personal circumstances. Teaching will be appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of all learners, including pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), disadvantaged pupils, looked after and previously looked after children, and pupils who may be vulnerable due to safeguarding or pastoral needs.

Teachers will take account of pupils' developmental stage, prior knowledge, emotional maturity and individual needs, adapting teaching and learning where appropriate to ensure all pupils can access the curriculum safely and meaningfully. Where appropriate, a trauma-informed approach will be adopted, recognising that some pupils may have experienced adverse childhood experiences, abuse, neglect or other significant life events.

The curriculum will reflect the diversity of modern British society whilst remaining rooted in the values and teachings of the Catholic Church. Pupils will be encouraged to recognise and respect the dignity of every person, challenge discrimination and prejudice, and understand their responsibilities in promoting equality, inclusion and mutual respect.

Teaching will be delivered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the school's Public Sector Equality Duty. No pupil will be disadvantaged or discriminated against on the grounds of disability, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or any other protected characteristic.

Relationships and Sex Education will actively promote respectful relationships, celebrate diversity, challenge stereotypes, and equip pupils with the knowledge and confidence to recognise, report and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment, abuse and discrimination, both in person and online.

Where pupils require additional support, the school will work collaboratively with parents and carers, the SEND team, safeguarding staff and, where appropriate, external agencies to ensure

that learning is delivered in a manner which is appropriate, supportive and responsive to individual needs.

Broad Content of RSE

The Relationships and Sex Education curriculum at Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ is carefully planned and sequenced to ensure that pupils build knowledge and understanding progressively throughout their secondary education. The curriculum reflects the statutory requirements for Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education, whilst remaining firmly rooted in the Catholic ethos and values of the school.

Relationships and Sex Education is delivered through Religious Education, Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education, Science, assemblies, tutor time, pastoral programmes and other appropriate curriculum opportunities. Learning is age-appropriate, evidence-informed and responsive to the needs of pupils.

The curriculum is organised around the following broad themes:

- Families and caring relationships, including marriage, stable relationships, parenting and the importance of family life.
- Respectful relationships, including kindness, empathy, equality, inclusion, communication, conflict resolution and recognising the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Online relationships and digital safety, including responsible use of technology, social media, digital footprints, privacy, consent online, artificial intelligence (AI), deepfakes, image-based abuse, sextortion, online grooming, pornography, misinformation and the influence of algorithms and online content.
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including consent, personal boundaries, contraception, fertility, pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), reproductive health and the law relating to sexual activity.
- Physical health and wellbeing, including puberty, personal hygiene, healthy lifestyles, nutrition, exercise, sleep, substance misuse and making informed decisions about health.
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing, including resilience, emotional regulation, self-esteem, recognising poor mental health, reducing stigma, suicide prevention, and accessing appropriate support.
- Personal safety and safeguarding, including recognising abuse, coercive and controlling behaviour, domestic abuse, sexual harassment, exploitation, violence against women and girls, honour-based abuse, forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), county lines, and knowing how and where to seek help.
- Equality, diversity and citizenship, including respect for the dignity of every individual, challenging prejudice and discrimination, understanding the protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010, and promoting inclusion, mutual respect and responsible citizenship.

Teaching will encourage pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to make informed and responsible decisions, build healthy relationships, manage risk appropriately and contribute positively to society. Throughout the curriculum, pupils will

be encouraged to reflect upon the values of the Gospel, Catholic Social Teaching and the dignity of the human person, whilst recognising and respecting the beliefs, backgrounds and experiences of others.

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing clear ground rules to promote respectful discussion;
- teacher exposition and direct instruction;
- questioning and structured classroom discussion;
- paired and group learning activities;
- case studies and scenario-based learning;
- role play and problem-solving activities where appropriate;
- reflection and independent thinking;
- age-appropriate video and multimedia resources;
- retrieval practice and assessment to consolidate learning.

Teachers will create a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment in which pupils feel confident to ask questions, challenge misconceptions and develop the knowledge and skills necessary to stay healthy, safe and informed throughout their lives.

Parents and Carers

Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ recognises that parents and carers are the primary educators of their children and that Relationships and Sex Education is most effective when schools and families work in partnership. The school is committed to fostering positive, open and respectful relationships with parents and carers, ensuring they are informed about the aims, content and delivery of the Relationships and Sex Education curriculum.

The school will consult with parents and carers when reviewing this policy and will provide opportunities for them to understand the curriculum, view teaching resources where appropriate, and discuss any questions or concerns they may have. Information about the Relationships and Sex Education curriculum, including this policy, will be published on the school website and made available upon request.

Relationships and Sex Education is delivered within the context of the Catholic ethos of the school, promoting the dignity of the human person, healthy relationships, personal responsibility and safeguarding. Parents and carers are encouraged to reinforce these messages at home through open and age-appropriate discussion.

In accordance with statutory guidance, parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of statutory Relationships and Sex Education, excluding those elements that form part of the National Curriculum for Science or the statutory Relationships Education curriculum. Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing to the Headmaster, who will arrange to discuss the request with parents or carers to ensure they understand the nature and purpose of the curriculum and the potential implications of withdrawal.

Where a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, the school will make appropriate arrangements for alternative supervised learning during those lessons.

The school believes that the classroom provides a safe, supportive and professionally led environment in which pupils can develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to build healthy relationships, stay safe and make informed decisions throughout their lives. We therefore encourage all parents and carers to allow their children to participate fully in the Relationships and Sex Education curriculum.

Balanced Curriculum

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that students are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. Students will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE (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.

Responsibility for Teaching The Programme

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lies with teachers of science, religious education, physical education, and PSHE. However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE programme. They will be role models for students of good, healthy, wholesome relationships as between staff, other adults and students. They will also be contributing to the development of 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 RSE. 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'².

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. External visitors enhance but do not replace the planned curriculum. Responsibility for the curriculum remains with the school.

Safeguarding

Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ recognises that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is a fundamental part of the school's safeguarding curriculum. Through age-appropriate, evidence-informed teaching, pupils are equipped with the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to develop healthy relationships, recognise abuse and exploitation, manage risk, seek support when required and make informed decisions that promote their safety and wellbeing.

The curriculum enables pupils to recognise and respond appropriately to a wide range of safeguarding issues, including:

- healthy and unhealthy relationships;
- consent and personal boundaries;
- coercive and controlling behaviour;
- domestic abuse;
- sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- child-on-child abuse;
- exploitation, including criminal and sexual exploitation;
- online abuse, grooming and manipulation;
- image-based abuse, including the non-consensual sharing of intimate images;
- sextortion and online coercion;
- artificial intelligence (AI), deepfakes and digitally manipulated content;

² Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools, CES, Feb. 2011

- pornography and its potential impact on attitudes and relationships;
- bullying, discrimination, prejudice and hate crime;
- honour-based abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM);
- county lines and criminal exploitation;
- mental health, emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention.

Teaching will encourage pupils to identify trusted adults, understand how and where to seek help, and recognise that concerns relating to their own safety or the safety of others should always be reported.

Relationships and Sex Education lessons are delivered within a safe, respectful and supportive environment. Ground rules are established to encourage respectful discussion whilst ensuring that pupils understand the limits of confidentiality. Staff will never promise complete confidentiality and will explain that any information suggesting that a pupil is at risk of harm, or that another person may be at risk, must be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

All staff delivering Relationships and Sex Education receive appropriate safeguarding training and understand their responsibilities under **Keeping Children Safe in Education**. Any safeguarding concerns or disclosures arising during or following Relationships and Sex Education lessons will be managed in line with the school's safeguarding procedures, ensuring that pupils receive timely and appropriate support.

Relationships and Sex Education is delivered in close partnership with the school's wider safeguarding, pastoral and wellbeing provision, enabling pupils to develop the confidence, resilience and knowledge necessary to keep themselves safe both within school and beyond.

Online Safety

Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ recognises that technology plays an integral role in the lives of young people and that digital literacy and online safety are essential components of Relationships and Sex Education and the school's wider safeguarding curriculum. The school is committed to equipping pupils with the knowledge, understanding and critical thinking skills required to use technology safely, responsibly and respectfully.

Through an age-appropriate and progressive curriculum, pupils will develop an understanding of both the opportunities and risks associated with digital technologies and online communication. Teaching will enable pupils to make informed decisions, protect their privacy, recognise online harm and know how to seek support when concerns arise.

The Relationships and Sex Education curriculum will provide opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of:

- safe, respectful and responsible online behaviour;
- maintaining healthy online relationships and appropriate digital communication;
- privacy, digital footprints and protecting personal information;
- the importance of consent in online interactions, including the sharing of images and personal information;
- recognising online grooming, exploitation, manipulation and coercion;
- the risks associated with sextortion, image-based abuse and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images;
- the influence of social media, online communities, influencers and algorithms on attitudes, behaviour and wellbeing;
- artificial intelligence (AI), including the creation and sharing of deepfakes, manipulated images and other AI-generated content;
- misinformation, disinformation and the importance of critically evaluating online information;

- the potential impact of pornography on relationships, expectations, consent and personal wellbeing;
- cyberbullying, online harassment, hate crime and discriminatory behaviour;
- reporting concerns, blocking harmful content and accessing appropriate support.

Pupils will be encouraged to think critically about the content they access online, recognise that online actions can have real-world consequences, and understand their legal responsibilities when using digital technologies.

Online safety education will be delivered through Relationships and Sex Education, Computing, Religious Education, assemblies, tutor time and wider safeguarding initiatives. The curriculum will be regularly reviewed to ensure it reflects emerging technologies, current safeguarding risks and national guidance.

The school works in partnership with parents and carers to promote safe online behaviours and encourages open communication between home and school regarding children's use of technology. Parents and carers will be provided with information and guidance, where appropriate, to support their children's online safety and digital wellbeing.

Any concerns relating to online safety, exploitation or harmful online behaviour will be managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy and Acceptable Use of Technology Policy, with referrals made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) where appropriate.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ is committed to promoting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of all pupils as an integral part of their personal development and overall health. In keeping with our Catholic ethos, we recognise the inherent dignity and value of every individual and strive to create a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment in which all members of our community can flourish.

Through a carefully planned and age-appropriate curriculum, pupils will develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to maintain positive mental health, build resilience and seek support when they or others are experiencing difficulties. Mental health education is delivered as part of the wider Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum and complements the school's pastoral care, safeguarding and wellbeing provision.

The curriculum will support pupils to:

- understand that mental health is a normal part of overall health and wellbeing;
- recognise a wide range of emotions and develop healthy strategies for managing them;
- build resilience, self-esteem, confidence and emotional literacy;
- understand the importance of positive relationships, belonging and connectedness in supporting wellbeing;
- identify common mental health difficulties and recognise when they or others may need additional support;
- develop healthy coping strategies for managing stress, anxiety, change, loss and adversity;
- understand the importance of sleep, physical activity, healthy nutrition and balanced lifestyles in maintaining good mental health;
- recognise the impact of social media, online activity and digital technologies on emotional wellbeing;
- know how and where to access reliable advice, support and professional help both within school and externally;
- understand the importance of seeking help early and supporting others appropriately.

In line with the statutory guidance, pupils will receive age-appropriate education that raises awareness of suicide prevention, enabling them to recognise warning signs, understand the importance of talking to trusted adults and know how to access immediate support if they are concerned about themselves or another person. Teaching will always be delivered sensitively, following current national guidance and safeguarding procedures.

The school recognises that discussions relating to mental health may lead pupils to disclose personal concerns. All staff delivering Relationships, Sex and Health Education understand their safeguarding responsibilities and will respond to concerns in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Where appropriate, pupils will be supported through the school's pastoral systems and referred to specialist services where additional support is required.

Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ is committed to fostering a culture in which pupils feel safe to talk about their wellbeing, know that help is available, and understand that seeking support is a sign of strength and resilience.

Other Roles and Responsibilities Regarding RSE

Governors

- Draw up the RSE policy;
- 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;
- The RE governor will share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used;
- Ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHE.

Headmaster

The Headmaster 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.

Personal Development Lead

The co-ordinator with the headmaster has a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to RSE and the provision of in-service training.

All Staff

RSE 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 RSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSE. 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.

Relationship to other Policies and Curriculum Subjects

This RSE 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 (including the Bullying Policy and the Safeguarding Policy). Students with particular difficulties whether of a physical or intellectual nature will receive appropriately differentiated support in order to enable them to achieve mature knowledge, understanding and skills. Teaching methods will be adapted to meet

the varying needs of this group of students. Learning about RSE in PSHE classes will link to/complement learning in those areas identified in the RSE audit.

Controversial or Sensitive issues

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. The governors believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and students, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion.

Some questions may raise issues, which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, e.g., where a child or young person's questions hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature.

Supporting Pupils at Risk and Managing Disclosures

Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ is committed to providing a safe, supportive and inclusive environment in which all pupils feel valued, respected and able to seek help when needed. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) provides opportunities for pupils to develop the knowledge, understanding and confidence to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships, identify situations where they or others may be at risk, and understand how to access appropriate support.

The school recognises that discussions during Relationships and Sex Education lessons may lead pupils to disclose concerns relating to their own safety, wellbeing or the welfare of others. Such disclosures may relate to abuse, neglect, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, online abuse, domestic abuse, mental health concerns or other safeguarding issues.

All staff delivering Relationships and Sex Education understand that they have a statutory safeguarding responsibility and will respond to any concerns in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Staff will listen sensitively and without judgement, reassure pupils that they have done the right thing by speaking to a trusted adult, and explain that information cannot be kept confidential where there is a concern that a child may be at risk of harm.

Relationships and Sex Education is delivered in a manner that promotes trust, respect and emotional safety. Teachers establish clear ground rules for discussion and use age-appropriate teaching strategies to minimise the risk of personal disclosure during lessons. Pupils are regularly reminded of the support available within school, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead, pastoral staff, school counsellors (where applicable) and other trusted adults, as well as appropriate external support services.

Through this approach, Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ seeks to ensure that every pupil feels safe, knows how to access help, and understands that they will always be listened to, supported and protected.

Confidentiality and Advice

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

All lessons, especially those in the RSE programme, will have the best interests of students at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and sex, developing appropriate personal and social skills and becoming appreciative of the values and attitudes which underpin the Christian understanding of what it means to be fully human.

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

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum complies with statutory requirements, reflects the Catholic ethos of the school and is effectively implemented across the curriculum.

The Headmaster has overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of this policy and will ensure that appropriate staffing, training and resources are in place to support high-quality RSHE provision.

The Personal Develop Lead, working in collaboration with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Head of Religious Education, Personal Development Lead and other relevant staff, will monitor the quality and effectiveness of the curriculum by:

- reviewing curriculum plans, schemes of learning and teaching resources;
- monitoring the quality of teaching and learning through lesson visits, work scrutiny and professional dialogue with staff;
- evaluating pupil knowledge, understanding and attitudes through assessment, pupil voice and feedback;
- consulting parents and carers as part of the school's policy review cycle;
- ensuring that teaching remains age-appropriate, evidence-informed and responsive to emerging safeguarding issues and statutory guidance;
- monitoring the effectiveness of staff training and identifying ongoing professional development needs;
- reviewing the curriculum annually to ensure it reflects current legislation, national guidance and local safeguarding priorities.

The school will also evaluate the effectiveness of the RSHE curriculum through:

- pupil surveys and focus groups;
- staff evaluation and curriculum review;
- parental feedback and consultation;
- safeguarding audits and analysis of relevant safeguarding trends;
- behaviour, attendance and wellbeing data, where appropriate;
- governor monitoring and challenge.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to statutory guidance, legislation or local safeguarding priorities. Any amendments will be approved by the Governing Body and communicated to staff, pupils and parents as appropriate.

Implementation and Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headmaster, RSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and Staff. The next review date is June 2027.