St Robert Bellarmine Catholic Primary School

Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy 2026

Our Mission Statement

"We are God's work of art."

Help each other
Be happy
Follow the light of Jesus
Include everybody
Everybody do their best in every way

Be friends with everyone
Be responsible for your own actions
Follow the light of Jesus
Work to the best of your abilities
Parents, teachers and children support each other.

Chair of Governors	**Anne-Marie Pennington**
Headteacher	**Mairead O'Neill Dowell**
Date	**September 2026**
Review Date	**September 2027**

1. Rationale

"I have come that you might have life and have it to the full." (John 10:10)

At St Robert Bellarmine Catholic Primary School, Relationships, Sex and Health Education is rooted in our Catholic understanding of the dignity of every human person, created in the image and likeness of God. Our mission statement, "We are God's work of art", shapes an approach which seeks to educate the whole child - spiritually, morally, socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically.

RSHE is taught positively and prudently within the context of loving relationships, human dignity, responsibility, safety and the common good. In accordance with the character of a Catholic school, the school teaches its distinctive faith perspective while also meeting statutory requirements, teaching the law factually, respecting the dignity of every pupil and family, and preparing pupils for life in modern Britain.

This policy reflects the Department for Education statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education in force from 1 September 2026, together with current guidance from the Catholic Education Service and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

2. Aims

The aims of RSHE at St Robert Bellarmine are to:

- provide a safe, coherent and age-appropriate curriculum in which sensitive questions can be explored;
- help pupils develop dignity, self-worth, self-respect, confidence, empathy, kindness and respect for others;
- teach the knowledge and skills needed to form and sustain healthy relationships, manage boundaries and seek help;
- prepare pupils for puberty and help them understand physical and emotional development, health, hygiene and menstrual wellbeing;
- teach correct anatomical vocabulary and give pupils the confidence to communicate concerns about their bodies and safety;
- develop pupils' understanding of online relationships, privacy, digital safety, harmful content and how to report concerns;
- support physical health, mental wellbeing, emotional literacy, resilience and healthy choices;
- help pupils recognise abuse, exploitation, bullying and unsafe situations and know how to seek support;
- enable pupils to understand the value of marriage and family life within Catholic teaching while respecting the dignity of pupils from all family structures;
- meet statutory Relationships Education and Health Education requirements and provide any school-chosen primary sex education in a clear and transparent way.

3. Statutory Framework and 2026 Guidance

From 1 September 2026, the school has regard to the revised Department for Education statutory guidance, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 make Relationships Education compulsory for pupils receiving primary education and Health Education compulsory in state-funded primary schools.

Primary sex education beyond the National Curriculum for Science is not compulsory. The Department for Education recommends that primary schools teach sex education in Year 5 and/or Year 6 in relation to conception and birth. Where St Robert Bellarmine provides non-statutory sex education, parents are informed in advance and the right to request withdrawal applies.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection, Online Safety, Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, SEND, Equality, Science, Religious Education and PSHE policies, together with current Keeping Children Safe in Education and other relevant statutory guidance.

4. Catholic Character and Church Guidance

The school's provision is consistent with its Catholic character and with current guidance from the Catholic Education Service and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Catholic RSE forms part of the mission to educate the whole person and is taught in a way that is faithful to the Church's vision of human dignity and relationships while recognising the contemporary context in which children live.
Where a faith perspective is being taught, staff will make this clear. The school will also teach applicable law factually and will ensure that all pupils are treated with dignity and respect, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

5. Curriculum Provision

RSHE is delivered through a planned, progressive programme across the school. The school continues to use A Journey in Love as a principal Catholic RSE resource, alongside PSHE, statutory Science, Religious Education, Computing/Online Safety and other carefully selected materials. Resources are reviewed against the 2026 statutory guidance and current diocesan/Catholic guidance before use.

The curriculum is sequenced so that knowledge and skills build over time. Teaching is responsive to pupils' age, stage of development, prior learning and local or emerging needs, without introducing material that is inappropriate for pupils' maturity.

Where appropriate, RSHE makes meaningful links with the school's Religious Education curriculum, including the Religious Education Directory (RED), To know You more clearly. RSHE remains a distinct statutory curriculum area even where links are made with Religious Education, Science, Computing, PE or PSHE.

6. A Journey in Love

A Journey in Love provides a Catholic framework for supporting children's physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development. Its progressive themes include:

Year group	**Theme**
Nursery	Wonder at God's love
Reception	God loves each of us in our uniqueness
Year 1	We meet God's love in our family
Year 2	We meet God's love in the community
Year 3	How we live in love
Year 4	God loves us in our differences
Year 5	God loves me in my changing and development
Year 6	The wonder of God's love in creating new life

7. Relationships Education – Primary

By the end of primary school, teaching will cover the statutory areas of families and people who care for me; caring friendships; respectful and kind relationships; online safety and awareness; and being safe. The revised 2026 guidance places particular emphasis on:

- healthy, safe and happy family life, while recognising positively that families can take many forms;
- skills for friendship, managing conflict, loneliness, kindness and repair of relationships;
- healthy boundaries, assertive communication, self-respect and respect for others;
- recognising stereotypes, prejudice and bullying and knowing how to challenge or report them;

- online respect, resisting pressure, recognising harmful contact or content, privacy and location settings, and understanding that online material may be copied and circulated;
- body ownership, appropriate and inappropriate contact, recognising harmful or dangerous relationships, and reporting concerns;
- using correct vocabulary for body parts so that children can communicate clearly about health and safeguarding.

8. Health Education and Wellbeing

Health Education supports pupils to make informed decisions about their physical and mental health, recognise when something is wrong and seek appropriate support. Teaching includes, as age appropriate:

- general wellbeing, emotions, self-care, loneliness, bullying, change, loss and bereavement, and where to seek support;
- the relationship between online life and wellbeing, including balanced use of technology and age restrictions;
- physical activity, healthy eating, sleep and healthy routines;
- health prevention, personal hygiene, dental health, sun safety, allergies, immunisation and vaccination;
- facts about harmful substances, including smoking, vaping, nicotine, alcohol and drugs, at an age-appropriate level;
- basic first aid and how to contact emergency services;
- puberty, physical and emotional changes, and menstrual wellbeing.
- The school uses sensitive and accurate language around menstruation and makes practical arrangements to support pupils who menstruate, including access to period products where needed.

9. Primary Sex Education

Sex education beyond statutory Relationships Education, Health Education and the National Curriculum for Science is not compulsory in primary schools. At St Robert Bellarmine, any additional primary sex education is planned carefully, is age and stage appropriate, reflects the school's Catholic character and is made clear to parents in advance.

In Year 6, A Journey in Love includes teaching connected with the wonder of new life. The school will clearly identify to parents which elements constitute non-statutory sex education and which elements are statutory Relationships Education, Health Education or Science.

Parents will be consulted about the content of primary sex education and will be offered information to support conversations at home.

10. Parents and Carers: Consultation and Transparency

Parents and carers are recognised as the first educators of their children. The school will proactively engage and consult parents when developing or reviewing this policy and will provide clear information about what is taught and when.

In line with the revised 2026 statutory guidance:

- the current RSHE/RSE policy will be published on the school website and supplied free of charge on request;
- parents will be informed about the content of RSHE, particularly sensitive content and any non-statutory sex education;
- a representative sample of planned resources will be made available to parents, and parents may request to view all curriculum materials used to teach RSHE;
- copyright restrictions will be managed appropriately but will not be used as a reason to refuse parents reasonable access to materials;
- if the school needs to respond to an emerging issue by departing materially from its published programme, parents will be informed appropriately and relevant materials made available on request.

11. Parents' Right to Request Withdrawal

Parents do not have a right to withdraw their child from statutory Relationships Education, Health Education or from content taught as part of the National Curriculum for Science.

Where the school provides sex education beyond the Science curriculum, a parent may request that their child is withdrawn from some or all of that sex education. In a primary school, the Headteacher must grant such a request.

Requests should be made in writing to the Headteacher. Before withdrawal takes place, the Headteacher will normally meet with the parent to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum, identify precisely which content is non-statutory sex education and discuss the possible implications of withdrawal. The discussion and agreed arrangements will be recorded. A pupil who is withdrawn will receive appropriate, purposeful alternative education.

12. Equality, Diversity and Respect

The school complies with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. RSHE will be taught in a way that does not discriminate against pupils or amount to harassment. Pupils will learn the importance of equality, dignity and respect.

When teaching about families, the school will recognise sensitively and positively that children may live in different family arrangements, including single-parent, same-sex parent, grandparent-led, kinship, adoptive and foster families. No pupil should be stigmatised because of their home circumstances.

The school's Catholic perspective on relationships will be taught clearly as a faith perspective. Applicable law and protected characteristics will be taught accurately and factually at an age-appropriate level. Bullying or disrespectful language or behaviour relating to any protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

13. SEND and Accessibility

RSHE is for all pupils. Teaching and resources will be adapted so that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum and prepare for adulthood. Adaptation may include additional pre-teaching, visual supports, simplified language without loss of essential meaning, repetition, structured scenarios and alternative ways of demonstrating understanding.

Staff will recognise that some pupils with SEND may be particularly vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, bullying or unsafe online contact. Teaching about boundaries, body ownership, trusted adults, reporting concerns and seeking help will therefore be explicit, accessible and revisited as necessary.

14. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

RSHE is an important part of safeguarding. Teaching sensitive topics can lead to disclosures or safeguarding concerns. All staff must follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and current Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Staff will never promise a pupil absolute confidentiality. Pupils will be told, in an age-appropriate way, that information may need to be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead if there is a concern about safety. Concerns will be acted on immediately and information shared only with those who need to know.
RSHE teaching will reinforce that abuse is never the fault of the child, that pupils should trust their instincts when something feels wrong, and that they should keep seeking help until they are heard.

15. Online Safety and Emerging Harms

The 2026 guidance strengthens the connection between RSHE and online safety. Teaching will help pupils understand that people may misrepresent themselves online; that pressure to share information or images should be resisted; that privacy and location settings matter; and that material shared online can be copied and circulated beyond the sender's control.

Where age and stage appropriate, teaching may respond to emerging safeguarding concerns such as pressure to share intimate images, grooming, sextortion, AI-generated or manipulated images, harmful online content,

misogynistic or discriminatory content and other forms of online abuse. Primary teaching will be protective and preventative, without exposing pupils to unnecessary or inappropriate detail. Parents will be informed where the school needs to address a significant emerging issue outside the normal published sequence.

16. Sexual Harassment, Harmful Behaviour and Respect

From early primary, pupils are supported to understand boundaries, kindness, respect, prejudice and safe relationships. The school adopts a whole-school approach in which sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, discriminatory or sexually harmful language and behaviour are challenged appropriately.

Teaching avoids stereotyping boys or girls and makes clear that anyone can experience harm. Pupils are helped to understand that respectful relationships require kindness and care as well as respect for personal boundaries.

17. Managing Questions

Pupils' questions will be answered honestly, sensitively and in a manner appropriate to their age, maturity and the school's published curriculum. Teachers will not introduce unnecessary detail simply because a question has been asked.

Where a question is better addressed individually, by parents or carers, or with safeguarding or pastoral support, the teacher may defer the question and follow it up appropriately. Staff will be alert to questions that may indicate exposure to inappropriate material or a safeguarding concern. The aim is to support the child so that unanswered questions do not lead them towards unsafe or unreliable sources online.

18. External Visitors and Resources

External organisations may be used where they add appropriate expertise, but the school remains responsible for what is taught and how it is taught. Before any external provider is used, the school will:

- check the provider's credentials and safeguarding arrangements;
- review lesson plans and all materials in advance;
- ensure content is accurate, balanced, age and stage appropriate, accessible and consistent with this policy and the school's Catholic character;
- avoid resources from organisations with inappropriate commercial interests or strongly partisan approaches to contested issues;
- agree how safeguarding disclosures will be handled;
- ensure parents can view materials in accordance with the school's transparency arrangements.

19. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

- approves the policy and holds the Headteacher to account for its implementation;
- ensures curriculum content and materials align with statutory guidance and the school's Catholic character;
- ensures provision is accessible to pupils with SEND and that pupils make appropriate progress;
- ensures parents receive clear information about curriculum content, resources, external providers and withdrawal rights.

The Headteacher

- ensures RSHE is taught consistently and safely across the school;
- ensures staff receive appropriate training and support;
- oversees parent consultation, transparency and requests for withdrawal;
- ensures safeguarding, equality and SEND duties are reflected in implementation.

RSHE/PSHE Leads

- maintain a coherent, progressive curriculum and curriculum map;
- review resources against current statutory and Catholic guidance;
- support staff subject knowledge and confidence;
- monitor teaching, pupil voice, curriculum coverage and outcomes;
- coordinate with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENDCO and subject leaders where curriculum content overlaps.

Staff

- deliver RSHE sensitively, accurately and in accordance with this policy;
- model respectful attitudes and language;
- make appropriate adaptations and monitor pupils' understanding;
- follow safeguarding procedures when concerns or disclosures arise;
- seek support from senior leaders where they are unsure how to address sensitive content or questions.

Pupils

- Pupils are expected to engage appropriately in RSHE, respect agreed ground rules, listen to others and treat questions, experiences and differences with dignity and sensitivity.

20. Monitoring, Assessment and Evaluation

RSHE is monitored through appropriate combinations of curriculum review, planning scrutiny, learning walks, pupil voice, staff feedback, parent feedback and review of pupils' learning. Assessment is used to establish whether pupils have understood key knowledge and can apply relevant skills, rather than to assess personal beliefs or private experiences.

The curriculum will be reviewed in response to pupil need, safeguarding trends, parent and pupil engagement, statutory changes and updated Catholic or diocesan guidance.

21. Policy Development and Review

This policy is informed by the Department for Education statutory guidance in force from 1 September 2026 and current Catholic Education Service guidance. The school engages parents and carers, staff and pupils appropriately when reviewing RSHE provision, and the Governing Body approves the policy.
This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if there is a significant change in statutory, safeguarding, diocesan or Catholic guidance. The current approved version will be published on the school website and made available free of charge to parents and carers on request.

Appendix 1 - 2026 Primary RSHE Curriculum Checklist

This checklist is intended to support curriculum mapping. It does not replace the full Department for Education statutory guidance.

Area	Key content to secure by the end of primary
Families and people who care for me	Safe and happy family life; commitment, care and stability; respect for different family structures; marriage and civil partnerships as legally recognised commitments intended to be lifelong; recognising unsafe family relationships and seeking help.
Caring friendships	Making and maintaining friendships; kindness; loneliness; honesty, trust and loyalty; managing conflict; recognising unhealthy friendships and seeking support.
Respectful, kind relationships	Needs and preferences of others; healthy boundaries; assertive and respectful communication; self-respect; manners; stereotypes; bullying; seeking help when concerned about violence or harm.
Online safety and awareness	Respect online; resisting pressure; evaluating online relationships and sources; risks from strangers or impersonation; minimum ages for social media; privacy and location settings; permanence/circulation of online material; reporting harmful content/contact.
Being safe	Boundaries; privacy and secrets; body ownership; safe/unsafe contact; responding to adults; recognising harmful or dangerous relationships; reporting abuse and seeking help until heard.
General wellbeing	Physical activity and time outdoors; self-care; emotions; loneliness; bullying; change, loss and bereavement; knowing when and where to seek mental health support.
Wellbeing online	Benefits and risks of internet use; balanced online/offline life; online influences; age restrictions; support for upsetting or harmful online experiences.
Physical health	Exercise, healthy eating, sleep, hygiene, dental health, sun safety, prevention and seeking medical help.
Substances and risk	Age-appropriate facts about smoking, vaping, nicotine, alcohol, drugs and associated health risks.
First aid	How to seek emergency help and age-appropriate basic first aid.
Changing adolescent body	Puberty, physical and emotional changes and menstrual wellbeing, taught before pupils are likely to experience them.

Appendix 2 - Reference Framework

This policy has been prepared with reference to:

- Department for Education: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education - statutory guidance, revised guidance effective 1 September 2026.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019.
- Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Education Act 1996 and Education Act 2002.
- Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Catholic Education Service / Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales guidance on relationship and sex education in Catholic schools, updated March 2026.
- The school's current Safeguarding and Child Protection, Online Safety, Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Equality, SEND, Science, Religious Education and PSHE policies.