



Relationship and Sex Education Policy

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C&S October 2024	Reviewed: no changes made
C&S October 2025	Reviewed: no changes made

ST.MARY'S CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL, YATE

RSE 2025/2026

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) at St Marys Primary School

Definition

The Sex Education Forum defines RSE as 'learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health'.

The aim of RSE at St Marys is to equip children and young people with the information, skills and values to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships, and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

Misunderstanding about what RSE really involves can be a barrier for parents, governors and school staff. Through encompassing the new statutory guidance on Relationships and Sex education (9th July 2020) we will be focusing on the two areas of: Relationships Education and Physical health and mental wellbeing.

Does our school need to have a RSE policy?

All schools must have an up-to-date policy which is made available for inspection and to parents. The policy must:

- define relationship and sex education;
- describe how relationship and sex education is provided and who is responsible for providing it;
- say how relationship and sex education is monitored and evaluated;
- include information about parents' right to withdrawal; and
- be reviewed regularly.

What aspects of RSE are compulsory?

The Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools. Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools however the DfE guidance 2019 (p23) recommends that all primary schools 'have a sex education programme tailored to the age and physical and emotional maturity of the pupils'. It is important to ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and – drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science.

St Mary's CofE Primary School

How does RSE link to other curriculum requirements?

Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which:

- Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society
- Prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

This is stated in section 2.1 of the National Curriculum framework (DfE, 2014) and relates to duties set out in the 2002 Education Act and the 2010 Academies Act. This gives schools a very clear remit to provide RSE and PSHE. Whole school Ofsted inspections (Section 5) consider the extent to which a school provides such a curriculum.

How does RSE relate to other statutory duties that schools must fulfil?

Safeguarding

RSE plays a very important part in fulfilling the statutory duties all schools have to meet. RSE helps children understand the difference between safe and abusive relationships and equips them with the skills to get help if they need it. State-funded schools have responsibilities for safeguarding and a legal duty to promote pupil well-being (Education and Inspections Act 2011 Section 41). Updated government safeguarding guidance is now available (Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025) and includes a section about being alert to signs that young girls may be at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM). During the school summer holiday, especially during the transition from primary to secondary schools is thought to be a key risk time for FGM. See also the government Multi-agency practice guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation (2025) which includes a section for schools. This may not appear to be a current, relevant concern regarding children at St Marys but it is important to remain aware and vigilant.

Equalities

The Equality Act 2010 covers the way the curriculum is delivered, as schools and other education providers must ensure that issues are taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination. Inclusive RSE at St Marys will foster good relations between pupils, tackle all types of prejudice – including homophobia – and promote understanding and respect. The Department for Education have produced advice on The Equality Act 2010 and schools (DfE 2014). See our Equality Statement at the end of this policy.

How RSE is provided

Sufficient time must be put aside in all year groups in each term to ensure that coverage and balance is adequately met. At St Marys, we will not refer to lessons as 'Relationship and Sex (RSE)' lessons. This helps to remove some of the taboos.

One of the reasons for this is that RSE is an integral element of a broader developmental personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme at St Marys, where the PSHE curriculum also covers emotional health and well-being, drugs, healthy eating and physical activity, citizenship and safety. There are links between areas of knowledge and understanding in PSHE and RSE, for example in relation to alcohol and drugs and emotional health. There are also links to other areas of the curriculum such as computing (staying safe online), citizenship and religious education.

Values and attitudes

At St Marys, RSE promotes the core values of respect, love, trust and care. We also provide the opportunity for children to reflect on their own attitudes and beliefs and those of their peers and others. The process of values clarification and development is common across the broader subject of PSHE.

Role of the Church

"RSE is an important part of PSHE. The Church of England believes that it is important to value and to protect all God's children and this informs our approach to Relationship and Sex education. We believe that all children are entitled to good quality Relationship and Sex education that treats all with dignity and respect."

The Church of England (2017) <https://www.churchofengland.org/education/church-schools-academies/curriculum-and-religious-education.aspx>

Privacy

Pupils', families' and teachers' privacy is protected by us following a number of other school policies (e.g. Confidentiality, Safeguarding, and Acceptable Use) and setting very clear ground rules for learning.

Behaviour

It is hoped that children will recognise these lessons as safe places to learn but it is accepted that the human instinct to feel uncomfortable in such situations may manifest themselves in behaviour that needs to be challenged. The school's Behaviour Policy will be followed in these circumstances, and such occurrences should be unlikely if the class sets ground rules prior to embarking upon potentially challenging subject matters. All pupils at St Marys will be aware of the need to use the correct terminology for body parts and especially reproductive organs.

All classes have a 'question box' that pupils can post questions to. In turn, the teacher will try to answer the questions (as appropriate) whilst retaining the child's anonymity.

What we teach and when:

RSE starts at reception in St Marys primary school so that children learn about their bodies, can recognise if other people make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe and can report abuse and get help. Lots of children start puberty before they leave primary school so it is important that all pupils know what to expect before it happens. This is why we have some RSE in every year of our primary school as it helps pupils to learn progressively as they mature and revisit the subject on a regular basis, to reinforce learning and provide opportunities to ask further questions.

In St Mary's school, we use the JIGSAW scheme of work to deliver the PSHE and SRE scheme of learning. With regards to SRE this is taught in term 6 and an overview of the objectives is outlined below.

Year Group	Overview
<i>EYFS</i>	Growing up: how we have changed since we were babies.
<i>KS1</i>	Boys' and girls' bodies; correct names for body parts. Boys' and girls' bodies; body parts and respecting privacy (which parts of the body are private and why this is).
<i>3</i>	How babies grow and how boys' and girls' bodies change as they grow older. Introduction to puberty and menstruation.
<i>4</i>	Internal and external reproductive body parts. Recap about puberty and menstruation. Conception explained in simple terms.
<i>5</i>	Puberty for boys and girls in more detail including the social and emotional aspects of becoming an adolescent. Conception explained in simple biological terms.
<i>6</i>	Puberty for boys and girls revisited. Understanding conception to the birth of a baby. Becoming a teenager.

Ground rules

Before any RSE (Personal Knowledge) sessions, the teacher must ensure that the ground rules have been set with the children in that class. For younger pupils, circle time activities can be used to develop the ground rules.

Once a working agreement has been made by the class, it should be referred back to and displayed during the Personal Development lessons. An effective working agreement or set of ground rules will contain the elements shown below – in language that is age appropriate and formulated (as far as possible) as positive behaviours.

Example of a working agreement

We will try:

- To be kind to each other;
- To listen to each other;
- To respect our rights to share different views;
- To take care with information we share about ourselves;
- To remember that we can always ask about things in private with an adult in school, but the adult may have to share information if they are worried about our safety;
- Not to ask personal questions

Older pupils may suggest 'confidentiality' as part of the ground rules, proposing that 'what is said in the class should stay in the class'. In reality, this is not feasible. Instead, teachers talk to pupils about personal boundaries, what information is private and how to protect their own and others' privacy.

Language and terminology

RSE at St Marys has a vital role to play in helping children develop a vocabulary they can use to communicate comfortably, respectfully and accurately about the human body, growing up, Relationship and Sex. This is only possible if adults teaching RSE are able and willing to model use of this type of vocabulary. At St Marys, teachers plan vocabulary lists for each lesson or unit of RSE and share the list with parents (by way of a brief letter or email) in advance of the teaching. This ensures that the parents are prepared for pupils' use of this vocabulary when they are at home.

We always use medically correct terms for genitalia and sexual parts of the body, for example, vulva, vagina, penis and testicles. Ofsted provides full support for this approach (2013) and have raised concerns that some primary schools have, in the past, failed to teach this vocabulary. As a barrier to safeguarding, this leaves children unable to describe abusive behaviours.

The use of respectful language which challenges sexism, homophobia and other forms of prejudice should be established in RSE at St Marys. We hope that this will have benefits for the whole school community – both in and out of lessons. Ofsted found that casual use of homophobic language in schools is often unchallenged (2013). Children and all adults at St Marys need to know that using the word 'gay', (to refer to something or someone as rubbish) is wrong and will not be tolerated.

Resources

Teachers will use a range of resources that are carefully selected created by JIGSAW to enhance and enrich RSE. These resources support inclusion in terms of the range of people and relationships they portray and must contain medically correct facts.

Teachers should work through the following questions when choosing and using resources

Choosing a resource:

- Individual resources may not meet all the above criteria but the programme should aim to use resources which, used together, promote inclusive RSE
- Is the resource consistent with the values set out in the school RSE policy?
- Is it factually correct and up-to-date?
- Does it encourage active and participatory learning?
- Is the resource contemporary in terms of the realities of children and young people's lives?
- Does the resource portray positive images of a range of children and young people?
- Does the resource show positive role models for girls and boys / women and men and avoid stereotypes relating to gender and sexual orientation?
- Is the resource inclusive on the basis of home and family circumstance, gender, sexuality, race, faith, culture and disability?
- Is it appropriate for the age, ability and maturity of the children and young people?
- Is it necessary for parents and carers to be consulted about the resources?
- Are teachers confident about using the resource?

Using a resource

- Will the resource be used in its entirety, or will it be more appropriate to adapt it and select from it?
- Does use of the resource fit into a planned and developmental programme of RSE?
- Is there a range of types of resource being used across the RSE programme including a variety of formats such as video, audio, visual, games, and models?

External Visitors

An external visitor should not be used as a substitute for a teacher. They should also comply with the school policy on confidentiality. Ultimately, we refer to the schools 'Outside Visitors Policy'.

How Parents and Pupils are consulted

The government guidance on RSE (DfEE 2000) emphasises the importance of schools working in partnership with parents. "Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory Relationships and Sex Education" DfE Guidance p.17. At St Mary's school, puberty is taught as a statutory requirement of Health Education and covered by the Jigsaw scheme of learning. Therefore we conclude that sex education refers to the human reproduction and therefore parents are able to request that their child can be withdrawn from lessons that explicitly teach this e.g. conception, birth and having a baby.

At St Marys, if parents wish to exercise their right to withdraw their child from any RSE taught outside of the Science National Curriculum or they should do so by writing to the Head Teacher.

Parents are able to view the RSE policy and are able to have a copy of it. Parents should also be aware that schools are legally required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Relationship and Sex topics can arise incidentally in other subjects and it is not possible to withdraw pupils from these relatively limited and often unplanned discussions. At St Marys, teachers will exercise due caution bearing in mind their knowledge of the pupils in their class. If parents do 'opt-out' we will offer further dialogue, either by letter or at a meeting. Parents will be encouraged to provide RSE at home if they choose to withdraw their child. In such cases, we will offer to parents the materials used with pupils in school if they wish to use them at home. When the policy and scheme of work are due for review parents will be encouraged to provide their views through a variety methods eg questionnaires, workshops, forums.

Pupil Consultation

Asking children their views on RSE gives them an opportunity to be active citizens and ensures that teaching can meet the specific needs of the children it is aimed at.

At St Marys, pupil consultation can takes the form of discussions within classroom activities which ensure all pupils have a voice in the process.

Some of the questions asked might be:

- Where do you get information about your body, growing up, relationships and feelings?
- What would you like more information on?
- Do you feel able to ask for support and advice?
- Do you feel confident talking about feelings and emotions?
- Do you feel safe to learn in RSE lessons?
- Do the activities used in lessons help you to learn?
- What do you think would improve RSE in our school?

Disclosures – linked to Safeguarding Policy

Any disclosures or concerns that arise from RSE lessons will be dealt with in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

How RSE is assessed, monitored and evaluated

Assessment

Assessment in RSE at St Marys is 'Needs assessment' or 'needs identification'. This has a particular function which is to indicate the existing knowledge and skills of pupils. This enables a teacher to plan a programme that is relevant to the group and builds on prior learning. It also serves as a baseline against which future progress may be assessed. Needs assessment information from pupils should be gathered by teachers at the outset by using techniques such as 'Draw and Write' activities, mind maps and quizzes.

At the end of a unit of learning, pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they have learned and the progress they have made by asking some of the following questions:

- What new information have I learnt?
- What do I now think and believe?
- Has listening to the views of others changed my views and/or beliefs?
- Did I learn anything I did not expect to?
- How will it change my behaviour in the future?
- How did I feel about what I found out?
- What feelings did I have during the session?
- What do I now need/want to learn?
- Is there anyone else I need to talk to about this?

Individual responses could be recorded or it may be that pupils are merely encouraged to internalise their thoughts and responses as part of self-assessment.

Monitoring

Monitoring is a leadership activity (carried out by the PSHE Coordinator, Head teacher and the Governor with responsibility for RSE). It is an ongoing process that checks the degree to which the RSE Policy and programme is being effectively implemented. Monitoring answers the questions:

- Is the programme effectively managed and are staff clear about their roles and responsibilities?
- Does the planned programme reflect national guidance, local priorities and pupils' needs?
- Are all pupils being taught the programme as planned?
- Is the quality of teaching consistent across all classes and does it exemplify best practice?

Evaluation

Evaluation is what the teachers do in response to the teaching. It is the process that measures whether the lesson or unit of work is effective and worthwhile. It should be used as a means of improving provision and raising standards. Evaluation helps to identify issues for development and can prompt a review process and this may result in changes to the RSE programme or policy. Teachers are encouraged to feed such findings back to the PSHE Coordinator.

Evaluation answers the questions:

- Has this lesson or unit enabled the pupils to learn what was intended?
- Does it meet the needs of the pupils?
- What do we think of it? (teachers and pupils)
- What are its good and bad points?
- Do we need to modify it in any way to improve it?

Meeting the needs of girls who are menstruating

On the very few previous occasions when these requirements have been needed to be met we have been approached by a parent with the child. Reassurance is always given and the facility to use of toilets where there is a disposal unit. It has been expected that the families will provide their own supplies but that they can be stored in the child's classroom. A member of staff who the child feels comfortable with, is assigned to support the pupil. We will also keep a selection of sanitary products for emergency eventualities.

Role of the School Nurse

The extent to which the school nurse contributes to RSE will depend, in part, on capacity and local resources; in recent times, this support has dwindled. However, we will always try to employ the services of the school nurse where possible.

Communication

This policy will be shared with parents and carers through the school website at <http://www.stmarysyate.co.uk/> or upon request a paper copy can be provided.

Equality Statement

At St Marys Primary School, we actively seek to encourage equity and equality through our teaching. As such, we seek to advance the equality of opportunity between people who share any of the following characteristics:

- gender;
- ethnicity;
- disability;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy or maternity.

The use of stereotypes under any of the above headings will always be challenged.

Inclusion

Our school is an inclusive school. We aim to make all pupils feel included in all our activities. We try to make all our teaching fully inclusive. We recognise the entitlement of all pupils to a balanced, broadly-based curriculum. We have systems in place for early identification of barriers to their learning and participation so that

they can engage in school activities with all other pupils. We acknowledge the need for high expectations and suitable targets for all children.

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