



‘Working together to safeguard children’

“RESPECT, BELIEVE, ACHIEVE.”

Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School

Curriculum for life (RSE) Policy

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Statement of intent

At Cardinal Heenan, we understand the importance of educating pupils about sex, relationships and their health, for them to make **informed and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships**.

The teaching of RSHE can help to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. It allows us to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and in the wider society.

Effective teaching will support young people to cultivate positive characteristics including resilience, self-worth, self-respect, honesty, integrity, courage, kindness, and trustworthiness. It will also support the prevention of harms by helping young people understand and identify when things are not right.

We have an obligation to provide pupils with high-quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects. This policy outlines how the school’s RSHE curriculum is organised and delivered, to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- **DfE (July 2025) ‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education’ (Statutory Guidance)**
- **DfE (2026) ‘Keeping children safe in education 2026**
- DfE (2015) ‘National curriculum in England: science programmes of study’
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Online Safety Act

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Technology Acceptable Terms of Use Agreement



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- Pupil Confidentiality Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes.
- Ensuring the RSHE curriculum is well-led, effectively managed and well-planned.
- Evaluating the quality of provision through regular and effective self-evaluation.
- Ensuring that teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND.
- Providing clear information to parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn.
- Ensuring RSHE is resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures the school can fulfil its legal obligations.
- Maintaining and developing the religious ethos of the school.
- Creating and keeping up-to-date a separate written statement of this policy and ensuring the statement is published on the school’s website and provided free of charge to anyone who requests it.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring all staff are suitably trained to deliver the subjects.
- Ensuring parents are fully informed of this policy.
- Reviewing all requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory elements of the RSHE curriculum.
- Discussing withdrawal requests with parents, and the pupil if appropriate, to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum, including the benefits of receiving the education. **This process will be documented to ensure a record is kept.**
- Ensuring withdrawn pupils receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.
- Encouraging parents to be involved in consultations regarding reviews of the school’s RSHE curriculum.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Reporting to the governing board on the effectiveness of this policy and the curriculum.

The RSHE subject leader will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the delivery of RSHE.
- Working closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure the RSHE curriculum compliments, and does not duplicate, the content covered in other curriculum subjects.



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- Ensuring the curriculum is age-appropriate and of high quality.
- Reviewing changes to the RSHE curriculum and advising on their implementation.
- Monitoring the learning and teaching of RSHE, providing support to staff where necessary.
- Ensuring the continuity and progression between each year group.
- Helping to develop colleagues’ expertise in the subject.
- Ensuring teachers are provided with adequate resources to support teaching of the curriculum.
- Ensuring the school meets its statutory requirements in relation to RSHE.
- Leading staff meetings and ensuring all members of staff involved in the curriculum have received the appropriate training.
- Organising, providing and monitoring CPD opportunities in the subject.
- Ensuring the correct standards are met for recording and assessing pupil performance.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the subjects and providing reports to the headteacher.

The DSL will be responsible for:

- Offering advice and consultation for safeguarding-related subjects in the RSHE curriculum.
- Promoting knowledge and awareness of safeguarding issues amongst staff.
- Being an appropriate point of contact for staff who have concerns about the welfare of a pupil that have arisen through the teaching of RSHE.

Subject teachers will be responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with, and promoting, this policy.
- Delivering RSHE in a manner that is sensitive, of high quality and appropriate for each year group.
- Ensuring they do not express personal views or beliefs when delivering the curriculum.
- Planning lessons effectively, ensuring a range of appropriate teaching methods and resources are used to cover the content.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE.
- Liaising with the SENCO to identify and respond to individual needs of pupils with SEND. Liaising with the RSHE subject leader on key topics, resources and support for individual pupils.
- Monitoring pupil progress in RSHE.
- Reporting any concerns regarding the teaching of RSE or health education to the RSHE subject leader or a member of the SLT.
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that pupils may make as a result of the subject content to the DSL, **following the school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.**



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- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents have requested to withdraw them from the non-statutory components of RSE, by providing them with alternative education opportunities.

The SENCO will be responsible for:

- Advising teaching staff how best to identify and support pupils’ individual needs.
- Advising staff on the use of TAs in order to meet pupils’ individual needs.

3. Organisation of the RSHE curriculum

For the purpose of this policy:

- “RSHE” is used to refer to the overall programme of relationships, sex and health education.
- “RSE” refers to relationships and sex education and is defined as teaching pupils about developing healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, and helping them to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others.
- Within RSE, we differentiate between relationships education and sex education so that parents have clear information. Relationships education does not involve explaining the detail of different forms of sexual activity, though it can cover sensitive topics such as sexual violence to keep children safe. Sex education addresses the detail of human sexuality and sexual health.
- “Health education” is defined as teaching pupils about how they can make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing, and how physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked.

The RSHE curriculum has been developed, and will be monitored and reviewed, in consultation with teachers, pupils and parents, and in accordance with DfE recommendations. We will gather the views of teachers, pupils and parents in the following ways:

- Questionnaires
- Meetings
- Letters
- Training sessions

The majority of the RSHE curriculum is delivered through our curriculum for life, with statutory elements taught via the science curriculum. The RSHE subject leader will work closely with their colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure the curriculum complements and does not duplicate the content covered in national curriculum subjects.

The school will ensure that the curriculum remains in line with the DfE’s ‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education’ guidance at all times. The school will consider the context and views of the wider local community when developing the curriculum to ensure it is reflective of circumstances in the local area. The



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religious background of all pupils will also be considered when planning teaching, to ensure all topics included are appropriately handled.

The RSHE curriculum will be informed by topical issues in the school and wider community, to ensure it is tailored to pupils’ needs. Our Curriculum for Life RSHE lessons are also designed in light of the Gospel Values and the teaching of the Catholic Church.

4. RSE subject overview

RSE will continue to develop pupils’ knowledge on the topics taught at a primary level, in addition to the content outlined in this section.

Families By the end of secondary school, pupils will know:

- That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- What marriage is, including their legal status, e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.
- Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.
- **That ‘common-law marriage’ is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children.**
- **That forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 are illegal.**
- About the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.
- **How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships.**
- About the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting **and the importance of the early years of a child’s life for brain development.**

Pupils will also know how to:

- Determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy.
- Judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe, and recognise this in others’ relationships.
- Seek help or advice if needed, including reporting concerns about others.

Respectful relationships, including friendships

By the end of secondary school, pupils will know:

- About the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships in all contexts (including online), including trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy,



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consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationships.

- Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.
- How stereotypes, in particular those based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage, e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour, and how to recognise and challenge misogyny and other forms of prejudice.
- That in school and wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs.
- The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others, including developing one's own interests, hobbies, friendship groups and skills.
- How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers.
- Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness, and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration.
- About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to seek help.
- About the types of behaviour in relationships that can be criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.
- What constitutes sexual harassment and violence and why these are always unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it.
- About the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, with reference to the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010, and that everyone is unique and equal.
- The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Pupils should understand that just because someone says yes to doing something, that doesn't automatically make it ethically ok.
- How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships.
- How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviours and by disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing some people with a sense of sexual entitlement to the bodies of others.
- Pupils should have an opportunity to discuss how some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called "involuntary celibates" (incels) or online influencers.

Online and media



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By the end of secondary school, pupils will know:

- Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, and that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts.
- About online risks, including that material shared with another person has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online.
- The importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect information online, and the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues.
- Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which they receive.
- What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.
- The impact of viewing harmful content.
- That specifically sexually explicit material, e.g. pornography, presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners.
- That sharing and viewing indecent images of children is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties, including jail.
- How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.
- The characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and / or may post things which aren't real / have been created with AI. That social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online.
- That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI generated imagery. Pupils should understand the potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. Pupils should know how to seek support and should understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either at school or with the police, if an image of themselves has been shared. Pupils should also understand that sharing indecent images of people over 18 without consent is a crime.
- About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them.
- That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons. Pupils should be taught where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Pupils should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong.



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- That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice.
- How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns.
- That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (e.g. to enable targeted advertising).
- That criminals can operate online scams, for example using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion.
- That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and that these can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice. It is important to be able to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how they might pose a risk.

Being safe

By the end of secondary school, pupils will know:

- About the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, financial exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships.
- The concepts and laws relating to sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault.
- How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn – this includes online. That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent.
- How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. Pupils should learn ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. Pupils should understand that there are strategies they can use to increase their safety, and that this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour. Pupils might reflect on the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn’t feel right, and should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions.
- What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it.
- That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language / attention / touching, taking and/or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting.
- The concepts and laws relating to harmful sexual behaviour, which includes all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people but also includes other forms of concerning behaviour like using age-inappropriate sexual language.



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- The concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour.
- That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed.
- The physical and emotional damage which can be caused by female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law around these areas. This should include that it is a criminal offence for anyone to perform or assist in the performance of FGM, virginity testing or hymenoplasty, in the UK or abroad, or to fail to protect a person under 16 for whom they are responsible.
- That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury. That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone’s neck or covering someone’s mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death.
- That pornography presents some activities as normal which many people do not and will never engage in, some of which can be emotionally and/or physically harmful.
- How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced from others, including information on where to report abuse, and where to seek medical attention when required, for example after an assault.

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

- By the end of secondary school, pupils will know:
 - How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship.
 - That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive.
 - The law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex.
 - That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively and negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.
 - That some sexual behaviours can be harmful.
 - The range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.
 - That they have a choice to delay sex or enjoy intimacy without sex.
 - The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, their effectiveness and options available **including male and female condoms, and signposting**



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towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decision-making.

- The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage.
- That there are choices in relation to pregnancy, with legally and medically accurate, impartial information on all options including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help.
- How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex and the importance of facts about testing.
- **The use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and how and where to access them. The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma.**
- About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
- How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.
- How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.
- **How to counter misinformation, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further advice.**

5. RSE programmes of study

The school will determine an age-appropriate, developmental curriculum which meets the needs of young people and includes the statutory content outlined in section 4 of this policy. Our RSE lessons are also designed in light of the Gospel Values and the teaching of the Catholic Church.

6. Health education subject overview

The physical health and mental wellbeing curriculum will continue to develop pupils' knowledge on the topics taught at a primary level, in addition to the content outlined in this section.

Mental wellbeing

By the end of secondary school, pupils will know:

- How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.
- That happiness is linked to being connected to others.
- How to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns.
- About common types of mental ill health, e.g. anxiety and depression.
- How to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health.



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- About the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.
- **That worrying and feeling down are normal, can affect everyone at different times and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition, and that managing those feelings can be helped by seeing them as normal.**
- **Understanding how to overcome anxiety or other barriers to participating in fun, enjoyable or rewarding activities.**
- **That gambling can lead to serious mental health harms, including anxiety, depression, and suicide, and that some gambling products are more likely to cause these harms than others.**
- **That the co-occurrence of alcohol/drug use and poor mental health is common and that the relationship is bi-directional: mental health problems can increase the risk of alcohol/drug use, and alcohol/drug use can trigger mental health problems or exacerbate existing ones. That stopping smoking can improve people’s mental health and decrease anxiety.**

Internet safety and harms

By the end of secondary school, pupils will know:

- About the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online, over-reliance on online relationships, **the risks related to online gambling and gambling-like content within gaming, including the accumulation of debt, how information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online.**
- How to identify harmful behaviours online, including bullying, abuse or harassment, and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours.
- **The risks of illegal behaviours online, including drug and knife supply or the sale or purchasing of illicit drugs online.**
- **The serious risks of viewing online content that promotes self-harm, suicide or violence, including how to safely report this material and how to access support after viewing it.**

Physical health and fitness

By the end of secondary school, pupils will know about:

- The positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress.
- The characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health.
- About the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.



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Healthy eating

By the end of secondary school, pupils will know how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer.

Drugs, alcohol and tobacco

By the end of secondary school, pupils will know about:

- The facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the increased risk of potent synthetic drugs being added to illegal drugs, the risks of illicit vapes containing drugs, illicit drugs and counterfeit medicines, and the link between drug use and serious mental health conditions.
- The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.
- The physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption, what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood, and the legal age of sale for alcohol in England. Understanding how to increase personal safety while drinking alcohol, including how to decrease the risks of having a drink spiked or of poisoning from potentially fatal substances such as methanol.
- The physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency.
- The dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks.
- The facts about the harms from smoking tobacco, the benefits of quitting and how to access the support to do so.
- **The facts about vaping, including the harms posed to young people, and the role that vapes can play in helping adult smokers to quit.**
- **The facts about nicotine pouches, which carry the same addiction risk as other nicotine products.**

Health and prevention

By the end of secondary school, pupils will know about:

- Personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics.
- Dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist.
- The benefits of regular self-examination and screening and is taught in the later years of secondary school e.g. at KS4/5.
- **The facts and science relating to immunisation, vaccination and antimicrobial resistance.**
- **How and when to self-care for minor ailments, and the role of pharmacists as knowledgeable healthcare professionals.**



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- The importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health, including the importance of screen-free time before bed, and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.
- The importance of healthy behaviours before and during pregnancy, including the importance of pre-conception health, including taking folic acid. The importance of pelvic floor health. Information on miscarriage and pregnancy loss, and how to access care and support.
- How to navigate their local healthcare system: what a GP is; when to use A&E / minor injuries; accessing sexual health and family planning clinics; the role of local pharmacies; and how to seek help via local third sector partners which may have specialist services.
- The concept of Gillick competence. That the legal age of medical consent is 16. That before this, a child’s parents will have responsibility for consenting to medical treatment on their behalf unless they are Gillick competent to take this decision for themselves. Pupils should understand the circumstances in which someone over 16 may not be deemed to have capacity to make decisions about medical treatment.

Basic first aid

By the end of secondary school, pupils will know:

- Basic treatments for common injuries.
- Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR, from Year 8 onwards.
- About the purpose of defibrillators, when one might be needed and who can use them.

Changing adolescent body

By the end of secondary school, pupils will know:

- Key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual wellbeing, including brain development.
- About the main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.
- About menstrual and gynaecological health, including: what is an average period; period problems such as premenstrual syndrome; heavy menstrual bleeding; endometriosis; and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). When to seek help from healthcare professionals.
- The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and menopause, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.

Personal safety

By the end of secondary school, pupils will know about:



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- How to identify risk and manage personal safety in increasingly independent situations, including around roads, railways and water, and in unfamiliar social or work settings.
- How to recognise and manage peer influence in relation to risk-taking behaviour and personal safety, including peer influence online and on social media.
- How to develop key social and emotional skills that increase pupils’ safety from involvement in conflict and violence, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making.
- Which trusted adults they can talk to if they are worried about violence and/or knife crime, and the law as it relates to knives and violence. Content will relate to the local context and avoid using fear as an educational tool.
- The risks and signs that they may be at risk of grooming or exploitation, and how to seek help where there is a concern.

7. Health education programmes of study The school will determine an age-appropriate, developmental curriculum which meets the needs of young people and includes the statutory content outlined in section 6 of this policy.

8. Delivery of the curriculum Through effective organisation and delivery of the RSHE, the school will ensure that:

- Core knowledge is sectioned into units of a manageable size.
- The required content is communicated to pupils clearly, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned scheme of work.
- Teaching includes sufficient and well-chosen opportunities and contexts for pupils to embed new knowledge so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations. RSHE complement several other curriculum subjects. Where appropriate, the school will look for opportunities to make links between the subjects and integrate teaching.

The RSHE curriculum will be delivered by appropriately trained members of staff. The curriculum will proactively address issues in a timely way in line with current evidence on pupil’s physical, emotional and sexual development. RSHE will be delivered in a non-judgemental, age-appropriate, factual and inclusive way that allows pupils to ask questions in a safe environment.

Teaching of the curriculum reflects requirements set out in law, particularly in the Equality Act 2010, so that pupils understand what the law does and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of the decisions they make. **The school will integrate LGBTQ+ content into the RSHE curriculum – this content will be taught as part of the overall curriculum, rather than a standalone topic or lesson. LGBTQ+ content will be approached in a sensitive, age-appropriate and factual way that allows pupils to explore gender identity and the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships. All pupils are expected to learn about LGBTQ+ content, and parents do not have a statutory right to withdraw their children from lessons that include LGBTQ+ content.** The curriculum will be designed to focus on pupils of all gender identities and expressions and activities will be planned to



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ensure all are actively involved. The school will ensure it delivers teaching on sensitive topics, e.g. the body, in a way that is appropriate and sensitive to the various needs of the school community, e.g. cultural background.

Pupils will be made aware of the relevant legal provisions, taught factually, when the following topics are covered: marriage, including forced marriage and civil partnerships; consent, including the age of consent; domestic abuse, stalking, rape, sexual offences, FGM, virginity testing and hymenoplasty; sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation, including public sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour; the Online Safety Act; online image and information sharing, including AI-generated sexual imagery and deepfakes, online sexual harassment, grooming and sextortion; pornography; abortion; the protected characteristics; alcohol, smoking, vaping, nicotine products and illicit drug use; gambling; carrying knives and weapons; extremism and radicalisation; grooming or exploiting children into criminal activity, including county lines; hate crime; the age of criminal responsibility; and medical consent, Gillick competence and parental responsibility.

All teaching and resources will be assessed by the RSHE subject leader to ensure they are appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils, are sensitive to their religious backgrounds and meet the needs of any SEND, if applicable. Throughout every year group, appropriate diagrams, videos, books, games, discussion and practical activities will be used to assist learning. Inappropriate images, videos, etc., will not be used, and resources will be selected with sensitivity given to the age and cultural background of pupils. Pupils will be prevented from accessing inappropriate materials on the internet when using such to assist with their learning. The prevention measures taken to ensure this are outlined in the school’s Online Safety Policy, and Acceptable Terms of Use Agreement.

Teachers will establish what is appropriate for one-to-one and whole-class settings, and alter their teaching of the programmes accordingly. Teachers will ensure that pupils’ views are listened to and will encourage them to ask questions and engage in discussion. Teachers will answer questions sensitively and honestly.

Teachers will focus heavily on the importance of healthy relationships, including marriage, when teaching RSE, though sensitivity will always be given as to not stigmatise pupils on the basis of their home circumstances. In teaching the curriculum, teachers will be aware that pupils may raise topics such as self-harm and suicide. When talking about these topics in lessons, teachers will be aware of the risks of encouraging these behaviours and will avoid any resources or material that appear as instructive rather than preventative.

Teachers will ensure lesson plans focus on challenging perceived views of pupils based on protected characteristics, through exploration of, and developing mutual respect for, those different to themselves. **The school will be actively aware of everyday issues such as sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture within which these are not tolerated. Any occurrences of such issues will be identified and managed promptly. Sexual violence and sexual harassment are not**



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acceptable and will not be tolerated. Any reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be handled in accordance with the school’s Child-on-child Abuse Policy. RSE lessons should ensure that both boys and girls have opportunities to practise respectful communication and understand experiences which are different from their own, including menstruation and menopause. However, in some cases, such as when a school identifies a specific need, the school may consider that separating classes by sex is the best way to create a safe space for discussion of a particular topic. This should be done in a way that avoids stigmatising boys or making girls feel like they will inevitably be victims of abusive behaviour or that it is their responsibility to protect themselves.

At all points of delivery of the curriculum, parents will be consulted, and their views will be valued. What will be taught and how, will be planned in conjunction with parents. Our RSE lessons are also designed in light of the Gospel Values and the teaching of the Catholic Church. The procedures for assessing pupil progress are outlined in section 15 of this policy.

9. Curriculum links

The school will seek opportunities to draw links between RSHE and other curriculum subjects wherever possible to enhance pupils’ learning. RSHE will be linked to the following subjects:

- Citizenship – pupils are provided with the knowledge, skills and understanding to help prepare them to play a full and active part in society, including an understanding of how laws are made and upheld and how to make sensible decisions.
- Science – pupils are taught about the main external parts of the body and changes to the human body as it grows, including puberty.
- ICT and computing – pupils are taught about how they can keep themselves safe online and the different risks that they may face online as they get older.
- PE – pupils can develop competence to excel in a broad range of physical activities, are physically active for sustained periods of time, engage in competitive sport and lead healthy, active lives.
- PSHE – pupils learn about respect and difference, values and characteristics of individuals.

10. Working with parents

The school understands that parents’ role in the development of their children’s understanding about relationships, sex and health is vital and will, therefore, engage parents as far as possible in their children’s learning. This will include providing parents with frequent opportunities to understand and ask questions about the school’s approach to RSHE. The school will consult closely with parents when reviewing the content of the school’s RSHE curriculum, and will be given regular opportunities to voice their opinions and concerns. The school will use the views of parents to inform decisions made about the curriculum content and delivery; however, parents will not be granted a ‘veto’ on



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curriculum content, and all final decisions will be the schools to make. When in consultation with parents, the school will provide:

- The curriculum content, including what will be taught and when.
- Examples of the resources the school intends to use to deliver the curriculum.
- Information about parents’ right to withdraw their child from non-statutory elements of RSHE.

Through our newsletter, we are taking steps to pro-actively engage parents and make sure they are aware of what is being taught in RSHE. Parents/guardians are welcome to come into school to discuss the curriculum content and the importance of RSHE for wellbeing and safety, discuss any concerns, and receive supporting in managing conversations with their children about RSHE topics. Parents are able to view all curriculum materials used to teach RSHE on request. The school will remain aware that the teaching of some aspects of the curriculum may be of concern to parents. If parents have concerns regarding RSHE, they will submit these to f.rushe@cardinal-heenan.org.uk, or contact the school office to arrange a meeting.

11. Working with external agencies

Working with external agencies will be used to enhance our delivery of RSHE and bring in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging pupils. External experts may be invited to assist from time-to-time with the delivery of the RSHE curriculum but will be expected to comply with the provisions of this policy. When working with external agencies, the school will:

- Check the visitor credentials of all external agencies.
- Ensure the teaching delivered by the external experts fits with the planned curriculum and provisions of this policy.
- Discuss with the visitor the details of how they intend to deliver their sessions and ensure the content is age-appropriate and accessible for all pupils.
- Request copies of the materials and lesson plans the visitor will use, to ensure it meets the full range of pupils’ needs.
- Agree with the agency on how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports must be dealt with in line with the school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. **When contracting with external providers, schools should not agree to any contractual restrictions on showing parents any content that the school will use. Schools should communicate to providers that they are legally obliged to have regard to this statutory guidance, including the expectation that all content can be shared with parents. Where contractual clauses exist that seek to prevent schools sharing any material at all with parents, they are void and unenforceable.** The school will use visitors to enhance teaching by an appropriate member of teaching staff, not to replace teaching by those staff.



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12. Withdrawal from lessons

The school will always recognise that parents have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. The school will uphold that parents do not have a right to withdraw their child from the relationships or health elements of the programmes. **Nor can they be withdrawn from topics taught as part of the science curriculum, including science topics related to puberty or sexual reproduction.** Requests to withdraw a child from sex education will be made in writing to the headteacher. Before granting a withdrawal request, the headteacher will discuss the request with the parents and, as appropriate, the pupil, to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. The headteacher will inform parents of the benefits of their child receiving RSE and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have. All discussions with parents will be documented. These records will be kept securely in the school office in line with the school’s Records Management Policy. Following discussions with parents, the school will respect the parents’ request to withdraw their child up to and until three terms before the pupil turns 16. **In secondary, headteachers can refuse a request in exceptional circumstances, for example because of safeguarding concerns or a pupil’s specific vulnerability.** After this point, if the pupil wishes to receive RSE rather than be withdrawn, the school will decide to provide the pupil with RSE. Pupils who are withdrawn from RSE will receive appropriate, purposeful education during the full period of withdrawal. For requests concerning the withdrawal of a pupil with SEND, the headteacher will take the pupils’ specific needs into account when making their decision. **Where pupils ask questions that go beyond the content the school covers in sex education, or that relate to content from which they have been withdrawn, teachers will respond in a way that supports the child – for example by signposting them to a parent or another trusted adult, or to appropriate support services – recognising that pupils whose questions go unanswered may otherwise turn to inappropriate sources of information, including online.**

13. Equality and accessibility

The school will comply with the relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and will ensure the curriculum does not discriminate against pupils because of their:

- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Sexual orientation



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The school will consider the backgrounds, gender, age range and needs of its pupils and determine whether it is necessary to put in place additional support for pupils with the above protected characteristics. The school will design the RSHE curriculum to be inclusive of all pupils. The school will be aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to their characteristics, e.g. SEND or being LGBTQ+.

Form Tutors will understand that they may need to liaise with the SENCO and be more explicit and adapt their planning or work to appropriately deliver the curriculum to pupils with SEND within their form groups. Where there is a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the needs of pupils at different developmental stages, the form tutor will ensure the teaching remains sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and is delivered with reference to the law. The school will take steps to foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and behaviour between all pupils, and provide an environment which challenges perceived limits on pupils based on their gender or any other characteristic.

The school is actively aware of everyday issues such as sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture within which these are not tolerated. Any occurrences of such issues will be identified and managed promptly. Sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Any reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be handled in accordance with the school’s Child-on-child Abuse Policy. Pupils should also be taught the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment. This should recognise that people have legal rights by virtue of their biological sex which are different from the rights of those of the opposite sex with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. Pupils should also be taught to recognise that people with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, as with the other protected characteristics, have protection from discrimination and should be treated with respect and dignity. In teaching this, schools should be mindful that beyond the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment there is significant debate, and they should be careful not to endorse any particular view or teach it as fact. For example, they should not teach as fact that all people have a gender identity. Schools should avoid language and activities which repeat or enforce gender stereotypes. Schools should be mindful to avoid any suggestion that social transition is a simple solution to feelings of distress or discomfort. Where external resources are used on this topic, the school will avoid materials that use cartoons or diagrams which oversimplify the topic, that could be interpreted as being aimed at younger children, or that perpetuate stereotypes or encourage pupils to question their gender.

14. Safeguarding and confidentiality

All pupils will be taught about keeping themselves safe, including online, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. To meet DfE’s best practice advice, the DSL will be involved in the formulation of safeguarding-related areas of the curriculum, as the knowledge and resources may help to address safeguarding issues more appropriately and effectively.



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When teaching issues that are particularly sensitive for pupils of all ages, e.g. self-harm or suicide, teachers will be made aware of the risks of inadvertently encouraging, or providing instructions to, pupils. Teaching of these subjects will always prioritise preventing harm to pupils as a central goal. Confidentiality within the classroom will be an important component of RSHE, and teachers will be expected to respect the confidentiality of their pupils as far as is possible, in compliance with the school’s Pupil Confidentiality Policy. Teachers will, however, understand that some aspects of RSHE may lead to a pupil raising a safeguarding concern, e.g. disclosing that they are being abused, and that if a disclosure is made, the DSL will be alerted immediately. Pupils will be made aware of how to raise their concerns or make a report, and how their report will be handled – this includes the process for when they have a concern about a peer. **Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child. Staff should also be aware of mandatory reporting duties relating to FGM, that virginity testing and hymenoplasty became illegal in 2022, and of the Government’s planned mandatory duty for anyone in regulated activity relating to children, including teachers, to report if they are made aware a child is being sexually abused.**

15. Assessment

The school will have the same high expectations of the quality of pupils’ work in RSHE as for other curriculum areas. Lessons will be planned to provide suitable challenge to pupils of all abilities. Teaching will be assessed and assessments used to identify where pupils need extra support or intervention. There are no formal examinations for RSHE; however, to assess pupil outcomes, the school will capture progress in the following ways:

- Baseline assessments
- AFL strategies
- Self-assessment

16. Staff training

Training will be provided by the RSHE subject leader to the relevant members of staff to ensure they are up-to-date with the RSHE curriculum. **Training will also be scheduled around any updated guidance on the curriculum and any new developments, e.g. image-based abuse, deepfakes, online scams, or specific vulnerabilities relating to misogynistic online influencers**, which may need to be addressed in relation to the curriculum. The school will ensure teachers receive training on the Social Exclusion Report on Teenage Pregnancy, and the role of an effective RSE curriculum in reducing the number of teenage conceptions. Appropriately trained staff will be able to give pupils information on where and how to obtain confidential advice, counselling and treatment, as well as guidance on emergency contraception and their effectiveness. **We will ensure that teachers are properly equipped to lead discussions about sensitive topics such as eating disorders, self-harm, and suicide prevention, including what to do if a pupil makes a disclosure. This training will focus on**



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safe delivery, avoiding language that romanticises these issues, and not discussing instructions or methods of self-harm or suicide.

7. Monitoring and review

The RSHE subject leader will be responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning for the subject. They will conduct subject assessments on a termly basis, which will include a mixture of the following:

- Self-evaluations
- Lesson observations
- Topic feedback forms
- Learning walks
- Work scrutiny
- Lesson planning scrutiny

The RSHE subject leader will provide annual subject reports for the headteacher and governing board to report on the quality of the programme. They will also work regularly and consistently with the headteacher and DSL, e.g. through monthly review meetings, to evaluate the effectiveness of the subjects and implement any changes.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body in conjunction with the RSHE subject leader on an annual basis. Any changes needed to the policy, including changes to the programmes, will be implemented by the headteacher. Any changes to the policy will be clearly communicated to all members of staff and, where necessary, parents and pupils, involved in the RSHE curriculum.