

ST. DAMIAN'S RC SCIENCE COLLEGE



RSE Policy

Relationships and Sex Education

Approved by Governors:	June 2024
Date to be reviewed:	June 2026 Every 2 years

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Relationships and Sex Education Policy

The Mission Statement of St Damian's RC Science College expresses our intention to ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to fulfil their potential. St Damian's is an innovative, vibrant and exciting learning community where pupils not only achieve academically but also develop as well-rounded young people who live by the Gospel values. Pupils are at the heart of all that we do. We believe that our core Christian values enable pupils to experience the Gospel values as a toolkit for living a happy and fulfilled life.

Defining Relationship and Sex Education

The DfE guidance states that "children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way". It is about the development of the pupil's knowledge and understanding of her or him as a sexual being, about what it means to be fully human, called to live in right relationships with self and others and being enabled to make moral decisions in conscience. RSE should "give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship". The DfE identifies three main elements: attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding. St Damian's is clear that parents and carers are the prime educators for children on many of these matters. St Damian's complements and reinforces this role and will build on and extend the knowledge that pupils have learned at home. All RSE will be in accordance with the Church's moral teaching. It will emphasise the central importance of marriage and the family whilst acknowledging that all pupils have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from and support will be provided to help pupils deal with different sets of values.

Statutory curriculum requirements

St. Damian's is legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science, including the additional requirements for maintained secondary schools. In addition to this, the DfE have published a new curriculum entitled 'Relationship Education, Relationships and Sex Education' implementation for which is statutory from September 2021. As a school we will teach our distinctive faith perspective on relationships and balanced debate about issues that are seen as contentious will be encouraged. We will support pupils in matters of relationships and sex. Teaching will reflect the law (including the Equality Act 2010) as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.

Values and virtues

Our programme enshrines Catholic values relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life. It also promotes those virtues which are essential in responding to the God's call to

love others with a proper respect for their dignity and the dignity of the human body. The following virtues will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

Aim of RSE

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, our school aims state that we will endeavour to raise pupils' self-esteem, help them to grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of all persons and develop caring and sensitive attitudes. It is in this context that we commit ourselves: In partnership with parents, to provide children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education" which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

Policy context and rationale

This policy covers our school's approach to the teaching of RSE at Key Stage 3 and 4. It was produced by the PSHE Co-ordinator through consultation with the other Subject Leaders and the Governing Body.

Policy aims and objectives

We define 'relationships and sex education' to involve the forming and maintenance of family, friendships and more intimate relationships both online and in person with consideration of boundaries and health. We believe relationships and sex education is important for our pupils and our school because it supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy relationships, at the appropriate time.

Our school's ethos for our pupils is underpinned by our Christian principles and values of knowledge, determination and love. This policy fulfils our school ethos by giving students the information to challenge stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, as well as being able to tackle difficulties life may bring with resilience and an awareness to the wide range of support available to them. Our PSHE programme aims to help children to realise the nature and consequences of bullying (including cyber-bullying) as well as developing healthy coping mechanisms which will enable them to build and maintain strong relationships throughout their life.

Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

As PSHE education works within pupils' real-life experiences, it is essential to establish a safe learning environment. Clear 'ground rules' and a confidentiality policy that is understood by all (adults and children) are important elements of creating this. We will build a safe and supportive learning environment by creating a set of ground rules which will be referred to throughout the year. These involve having the 'right to pass', the right of confidentiality unless the information raises a safeguarding concern and the 'right not to answer personal questions'. We will ensure that where pupils indicate that they may be vulnerable and at risk, they will get appropriate support by Heads of Year and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This policy is informed by the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

Entitlement and Equality of Opportunity

The Governing Body is fully aware of its wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and ensures that the school promotes the needs and interests of ALL pupils by providing an inclusive curriculum, which includes the nine protected characteristics: These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Teaching considers the age, ability, readiness, and cultural backgrounds of children and those with English as a second language to ensure that all can fully access PSHE education provision. We promote diversity and inclusion and will consider all pupils' needs by differentiating learning in lessons so that everyone is able to progress with their understanding of relationship and sex education. We expect our pupils to consider others' needs by maintaining the ground rules at all times which ensures a respectful and non-judgemental learning environment carefully overseen by the class teacher. We will use PSHE education as a way to address diversity issues and to ensure equality for all not only through lessons but through other whole school activities throughout the year.

Lessons will also help children to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber-bullying), use of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help. Teachers will be aware that there may be a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of pupils at different developmental stages. The school will ensure that teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law.

Pupils with SEND

All pupils with SEND will have access to PSHE, Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised is the starting point to ensure accessibility. Teachers are also mindful of the need to prepare for adulthood, as set out in the SEND code of practice. The school is aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education and RSE can be particularly important for vulnerable pupils; for example those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities. These factors are taken into consideration in designing and teaching key topic areas to ensure that teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate.

Intended outcomes

Active engagement in learning, rather than passively receiving information, is most effective in teaching PSHE. Pupils need opportunities to consider and clarify their values and beliefs and to rehearse and develop enquiry and interpersonal skills. They also need a comprehensive, balanced and relevant body of factual information to inform their present and future choices. As a result of our RSE programme of learning, pupils will:

- Know and understand the respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others
- Take responsibility for their own actions and recognise the impact of these on others
- Recognise and value their own sexual identity and that of others
- Make sound and informed judgements which are respectful of the wishes of all parties involved
- Develop the skills of forming friendships and loving, stable relationships free from exploitation, abuse and bullying
- Self-regulate emotions without resorting to unhealthy coping strategies and know where and how to seek out support if needed
- Manage conflict positively, recognising the value of difference
- Develop self-esteem and confidence, demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others

- Build resilience and the ability to resist unwanted pressures, recognising the influence and impact of the media, internet and peer groups and so developing the ability to assess pressures and respond appropriately
- Communicate assertively and honestly within a relationship and recognise the appropriate stages in the development of relationships
- Assess risks and managing behaviours in order to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity
- Know the physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty
- Know the facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed and how this plays an essential role in procreation (Science, RE)
- Know how to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception (Science and RE)
- Know how to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice (Science and RE)

Learning and Teaching

Principles and Methodology: RSE education needs to consider pupils' starting points. Pupils will bring differing levels of knowledge and understanding to any issue explored through PSHE education. Often this prior learning is more complex than we might assume. Where possible, any new topic in PSHE education should start by determining pupils' prior knowledge. This will also enable teachers to make more effective judgements about pupils' development and progression in learning. We will determine pupils' prior knowledge through the questions students have for each new topic. This will accurately be able to measure the progress made by the end of the topic and any unanswered questions students may have can be addressed in class time. Learning and teaching is age appropriate and also addresses issues pertinent to the local area.

Research shows that attempts to scare or shock young people into making a healthy choice rarely work and can indeed 'backfire' by inadvertently creating excitement, curiosity or even status among pupils who accept the risk. This does not mean that potential consequences of the lifestyle choice should not be made clear, but balance is important. For example, young people frequently overestimate how often their peers take part in risky behaviours and feel that they are the 'odd ones out' if they don't do the same. It is important that they are reassured that the majority of young people actually make positive, healthy lifestyle choices. We will ensure that sessions, including those on risky behaviours, remain positive in tone by referencing facts and statistics that promote positive social norms. It is important that pupils are helped to make connections between the learning they receive in PSHE education and their current and future 'real life' experiences. The skill of critical reflection is therefore at the heart of assessment for learning in PSHE education. We will help pupils make connections between their learning and 'real life' behaviours by using examples within current affairs and social media.

Planning

The PSHE curriculum is structured thematically to include core aspects of PSHE and RSE. These are Health and Wellbeing, Relationships and Living in the wider world. The topics are developed in KS3 and built upon further in KS4 so that the learning is both age appropriate and relevant to students in that year of study.

During Key Stage 3, pupils will explore the following topics:

Health and Wellbeing

- Emotional wellbeing
- Managing puberty
- Staying Safe: the basics – online, rail, road and basic first aid
- Maintaining a healthy lifestyle: sleep, diet, dental, physical activity and personal hygiene.
- Recognising unwanted contact (FGM)
- Attitudes towards mental health – challenging myth and stigma
- Unhealthy coping strategies – self harm and eating disorders.
- Healthy coping strategies
- Unhealthy lifestyle choices – assessing risks for energy drinks, e-cigs, caffeine, alcohol, tobacco
- Medically prescribed vs recreational drugs – influences of substance abuse and safely using prescriptions
- Health in action: work life balance, leisure, sleep, exercise, healthy eating
- Cancer and self-examination
- Online resilience
- Managing risks in terms of gangs, the law and the physical risks of knife crime

Relationships

- Identity, rights and responsibilities in society
- Challenging prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination
- Signs and impacts of bullying in person and online
- Self-worth and positive relationships (building friendships)
- Unhealthy relationships – media stereotypes, expectations of romantic relationships
- Consent (the law and assertive communication of boundaries)
- Dealing with grief
- Gender identity
- Racism and religious discrimination
- Qualities of positive relationships, demonstrating these behaviours and forming partnerships.
- Sexting
- Parenting varieties and managing changes
- Homelessness
- Family conflict and resolution
- Readiness for sexual activity
- Portrayal of sex and relationships in the media and online
- Living in the wider world
- Careers and skills
- Equality of opportunity and discrimination in the workplace
- Protected Characteristics
- Identifying future aspirations, values and career choices
- Making safe financial decisions, saving, spending, budgeting, risk taking behaviour
- Communicating online
- Grooming
- Radicalisation online
- Critically assess media, recognise bias and misleading information
- Public vs private info – age restrictions, financial exploitation and online security
- Gambling and chance-based transactions
- Career paths and GCSE options
- Post 16 options
- Employment rights and responsibilities for young people
- Skills for enterprise and habits for supporting progress

During Key Stage 4, pupils will explore the following topics:

Health and wellbeing

- Challenging negative thinking and strategies for positive mental health
- Signs of emotional and mental ill health
- Challenging, stigma and stereotypes and misinformation about mental health in the media
- Role models
- Alcohol and substance abuse
- How to manage work/life balance
- Vaccinations and immunisations (Science and History)
- Blood, organ and stem cell donation (Science)
- Personal safety
- Registering with and accessing doctors, opticians and other health services
- How to balance ambition and unrealistic expectations
- How to develop self-efficacy, including motivation, perseverance and resilience
- The nature, causes and effects of stress
- Stress management strategies, including maintaining healthy sleep habits
- Positive and safe ways to create content online and the opportunities this offers
- How to balance time online

Relationships

- Relationship values
- Myths, assumptions, misconceptions and social norms about sex, gender and relationships
- Online relationships – opportunities and risks
- Impact of media and inappropriate images/videos on sexual expectations and behaviours
- Recognising and responding to pressure and coercion and exploitation
- Readiness for parenthood and positive parenting qualities (RE)
- Fertility, including how it varies and changes (Science)
- Pregnancy, birth and miscarriage (Science)
- Unplanned pregnancy options, including abortion (RE)
- Adoption and fostering (RE)
- How social media may distort, misrepresent or target information in order to influence beliefs and opinions
- How to handle unwanted attention, including online
- Abusive relationships
- Living in the wider world
- Budgeting and saving
- Preventing and managing debt
- Gambling
- Cybercrime
- Career development
- Challenges and responsibilities in the workplace
- Planning for the future
- Effective revision techniques and strategies
- Options post-16 and career pathways
- Application processes, including writing CVs, personal statements
- Interview technique
- Maximising employability
- Working part time whilst studying

Throughout the years all students will develop the skills of...

- goal setting, organisation skills and self-awareness
- empathy and compassion
- agency, strategies to manage influence and decision making
- self-confidence and self-worth
- risk management and support-seeking skills
- analytical skills and strategies to identify bias
- respect for beliefs, values and opinions and advocacy
- communication skills including assertive and negotiation
- leadership and presentation skills

Programme/Resources

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- brainstorming
- film & video
- group work
- role-play
- values clarification

Resources: The majority of lesson resources are a mixture of videos and scenarios sourced from organisations and charities such as:

- NSPCC
- PSHE Association
- Rise above
- Samaritans
- Teenage Cancer Trust
- British Heart Foundation
- Mind
- Barclays Life Skills
- TES

Timetabling

PSHE is taught once a fortnight for one hour at KS3 and KS4. In addition to this, the Careers strand of PSHE is taught during form times on Wednesday and Thursdays at KS4. Our provision is further enriched by the Careers provision and ASPIRE Days.

Assessment

PSHE education alone is not responsible for pupils' future lifestyle choices: as with any other subject, assessment in PSHE education should focus on learning, set against the lesson objectives and outcomes. Question sheets will be provided at the front of books to allow pupils to measure their progress and ask any unanswered questions by the end of the topic. It is important to recognise that

assessment in PSHE education is not about 'passing or failing', or about behavioural outcomes. Teachers and pupils both need to know what has been learned, and how learning and understanding has progressed. Although there are no summative assessments in PSHE, formative assessment will be used by the class teacher to monitor pupil progress. The PSHE marking policy will be used to assess pupil outcomes.

Teaching Responsibility and Staff Training

The programme will be led by the PSHE co-ordinator and will be taught by teaching staff and form tutors. Teachers responsible for teaching PSHE will receive training through the PSHE co-ordinator at the start of the year, using resources from PSHE Association CPD. When using external speakers to deliver aspects of our PSHE programme we will ensure they know the school's safeguarding policy and that their resources are age appropriate and complement the learning delivered in class time.

RSE is a whole school priority. All teachers have a responsibility of care; as well as fostering academic progress they should actively contribute to the guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of their pupils. Teachers will be expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school.

Confidentiality and Handling Disclosures

Due to the nature of PSHE education, pupils' learning may result in them seeking advice or support on a specific personal issue. Teachers cannot offer complete confidentiality; it is important for everyone's safety that teachers and pupils are clear about what can and cannot be kept confidential. It is also very important for external contributors to be clear about these rules and that whilst working in the classroom, they are bound by the school's confidentiality policy, not their own. We will set ground rules at the start of every lesson. If a pupil makes a disclosure, it will go straight to the safeguarding lead depending on the seriousness of the information divulged. The teacher or contributor is obliged follow the safeguarding procedures outlined by the school.

Responding to Pupils' Questions

It is important that pupils feel able to ask any questions that they wish and that their questions are valued. However, consideration should be given to how to respond to questions. Simply putting 'pupils' questions will be answered honestly and openly', without any consideration of prior learning or readiness, can be unsafe. If necessary, teachers also need to feel able to ask a pupil to wait for an answer to give them time to consult with the school's leadership team if they feel this appropriate, or if the question raises potential safeguarding concerns. (For instance: 'That is a really interesting question and I need time to think because I want to give you a proper answer.')

Teachers should feel able to work with colleagues if necessary to construct an appropriate answer. We will put in place an anonymous question box where pupils who are not comfortable raising questions in an open setting may ask questions to be responded to at a later date.

Pupils' questions will be answered with reference to the ground rules outlines for students at the start of lesson. If a safeguarding issue is raised by an anonymous question, we will report it to the safeguarding lead as soon as possible.

Learning in PSHE classes will link to learning in other subjects throughout the school (whole school SRE audit is available on request). Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in the programme.

External Visitors

On ASPIRE Days, the school may call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSE. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher led sessions.

It is important that any external visitor is clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in school delivering a session.

Health professionals will be asked to follow the school's policies, using negotiated ground rules and distancing techniques as other teachers would. They will ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice. As a school, we are very proactive in seeking external professional expertise as and when needed.

Parents and Carers

We are committed to working with parents and carers. We will offer support to a variety of resources or training should parents or carers need further guidance. We will encourage discussion of topics at home by making parents aware of the topics pupils will be covering throughout the year on the school website.

Revised Department for Education statutory guidance states that from September 2020, all schools must deliver relationships and sex education (in secondary schools). The parental right to withdraw pupils from RSE remains in secondary education, for aspects of sex education which are not part of the Science curriculum. We will communicate to parents about their right to withdraw their children. If a parent wishes to withdraw their child, we will arrange a meeting with the Headteacher and/ PSHE co-ordinator to identify the topics that their child will abstain from, and alternative work will be provided in this lesson time.

Monitoring Reporting and Evaluation

The PSHE co-ordinator will actively monitor the teaching through learning walks and work scrutiny. Teachers will critically reflect on their work in delivering RSE through termly. Pupils will also have opportunities to review and reflect on their learning during lessons. Pupil voice will be influential in adapting and amending planned learning activities that will provide feedback on the content delivered. This will then influence the approach and activities chosen in the years following.

Implementation and review of policy

Implementation of the policy will take place after consultation with the Governors in the Autumn of 2021. This policy will be reviewed every year by the Headteacher, PSHE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and Staff. The next review date is summer 2024.

Dissemination

The draft policy will be given to all members of the Governing Body. Copies of the document will be available to all parents through the school's web site. Details of the content of the RSE curriculum will also be published on the school's web site under Curriculum / PSHE Curriculum Overviews.