



St Benedict's Catholic High School
Human Relationships and Sex Education

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Signed: 

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1. Introduction

St. Benedict's Catholic High School has adopted the Diocese of Lancaster's model policy as the central structure for this policy. The policy sets out St. Benedict's Catholic High School's approach to Human Relationships and Sex Education and its place within the mission vision and values of our School.

2. Vision and Mission

As a Catholic School, Christ is at the center of everything we do. Our Benedictine Virtues, including truthfulness, diligence, stewardship, forgiveness, dignity and humility are rooted in our Catholic faith and The Rule of St. Benedict. We also recognise that our pupils need to develop resilience, responsibility, flexibility, and a willingness to operate as part of a team.

We pride ourselves on making a big difference to young people's lives. Everything we do, we do with our pupils at the heart of it. Our mission is simple, we want our students to strive not only for academic excellence, but for a fulfilled life guided by Christ and Virtue. We ensure that every one of our pupils leaves us equipped with the necessary skills, qualifications, and mind-set to take the next steps in leading a deeply rewarding life. We endeavor to nurture the caring, trusting, and positive relationships between pupils, staff, parents and carers and we make a promise to all pupils that they will be safe and happy here.

Vision for Human Relationships and Sex Education

At St. Benedict's Catholic High School, we endeavor to answer Jesus' call to be the very best we can be. We look after one another and show respect and love through our relationships with one another. In our school we welcome Jesus into our hearts. In the Beatitudes, Jesus offers guidance on living a blessed and fulfilling life by highlighting specific qualities and attitudes that are valued in the eyes of God. This roadmap that Jesus outlines serves as a prerequisite to his final and most important commandment: to love one's neighbour as oneself. Understanding both the Beatitudes and Jesus' final commandment, leads to a deeper understanding of our own happiness, the happiness of others, and the positive, loving relationships we form throughout our lives. Loving ourselves and others allows us to grow and flourish by fostering a greater respect for all individuals who are made in the image and likeness of God. We are all children of God, called to unite ourselves with the guidance of him, his Son, Jesus Christ, and driven by the Holy Spirit.

3. Procedures

The following groups have been consulted as part of producing this policy:

Staff

Governing Body

Parents/ Carers

School Sixth Form Students

Diocesan Education Service

The wider community

There has been a curriculum audit involving all the middle leaders of the school to verify the programme of study and confirm that the curriculum planning is robust. Stake holders have been invited by the Senior Leader for Personal Development to feedback on the policy.

In consultation with the Governing Body, this policy was initially implemented from Easter 2021 and is reviewed every two years, by the Headteacher, the SLT Lead for Personal Development, the Governing Body, student council and school staff. The next review date is October 2025.

The school website contains a statement about HRSE teaching, using the Ten:Ten Life to the Full Programme, and details of where to obtain a full copy of the policy upon request. The page covers the statutory elements of relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education that are not covered in HRSE, though the whole intent of the school curriculum

is drawn from its Catholic character. The Education Service is sent a copy of the school's HRSE policy, and the Governing Body ensures that this is up to date.

4. Rationale

As an 11 – 18 secondary school in the Diocese of Lancaster Education Service, we use the term Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) as it believes that relationships education is about all aspects of growing a fulfilled and happy life, sexual education is a dimension of this greater whole.

The incarnation of God is a defining belief of Christianity, the moment where God took on human form to carry out his plan for the salvation of humanity. As such, this endows the human form with an extraordinary dignity that goes beyond that of all other forms of life and shows that humanity alone can embrace this relationship with God. Therefore, as being made in the image and likeness of God, our relationship with our own bodies is not casual but rather a reflection of the personal and intimate relationship with God. Any teaching about love and sexual relationships in school must be rooted in this belief which is expressed in the Church's teaching about relationships, marriage, sex, and family life. The Church offers education to young people as a fundamental part of the process of human formation. Education about human love is no less a part of a Catholic school's responsibility than teaching about mathematics or English. At St. Benedict's Catholic High School, we teach young people about how to form relationships, including understanding loving relationships and acknowledging that children's first experience of love is in the home. We encourage children from the earliest age to recognise that they are all children of God who are made in His image and likeness. As children mature, we encourage them to follow the example of Jesus and live lives inspired by the virtues and values highlighted in the Gospel, enabling them to follow His final commandment to "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31). This is the basis for all relationships in our school. Teaching about relationships in our schools is supported by Christian virtue teaching as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and in line with 'Fit for Mission? Schools'.

The Department for Education in 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019) states that,

"to embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their well-being, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support."

The Diocese recognises the value of these curriculum aims. However, Catholic schools also have regard for the spiritual welfare of the students and recognises that to know and love God brings lasting happiness.

5a. Statutory framework

The statutory framework replaces Statutory Guidance: 'Sex and Relationships Education Guidance' (2000). The DfE states that it intends to update the guidance every three years. The statutory guidance is available from the DfE (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>). It should be read in conjunction with this Diocesan guidance and the following documents.

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool](#) (a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)
- [Behaviour and Discipline in Schools](#) (advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils)
- [Equality Act 2010 and schools](#)

- [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Alternative Provision](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#) (advice for schools)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) (advice for schools, including advice on [cyberbullying](#))
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools](#) (advice for schools)
- [The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance](#) (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- [Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools](#) (guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC))
- [SMSC requirements for independent schools](#) (guidance for independent schools on how they should support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development).
- [National Citizen Service](#) guidance for schools

Purpose of the Statutory Guidance

The guidance intends to assist children and young people in their development. The knowledge and attributes they gain will support their own, and others' wellbeing and attainment and help young people to become successful and happy adults who make a meaningful contribution to society. The Diocese of Lancaster agrees with these aims and seeks to support them through the appropriate development of the HRSE provision.

The table summarises statutory obligations.

Relationships Education	Relationships and Health Education Sex Education	
All schools providing primary education, including all-through schools and middle schools (includes schools as set out in the Summary section).	All schools providing secondary education, including all-through schools and middle schools (see Summary section of statutory guidance).	All maintained schools including schools with a sixth form, academies, free schools, non-maintained special schools and alternative provision, including pupil referral units.

5b. Requirements of the Diocese of Lancaster

The Bishop of Lancaster requires that all schools within the Diocese have a policy in line with Section 48 inspection requirements. (The term sex and relationships should be replaced in policies with human relationships and sex education.)

The key points within this guidance are as follows:

- All schools must have an up-to-date HRSE policy that may incorporate Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education policy drawn up by the governing body, and available to parents and for inspection.
- This should be developed in consultation with parents and the wider community.
- Secondary schools should have clear parameters on what students should know when they leave school and be prepared for further education. All schools' policies must include how they will teach Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education.

6. Virtues and Values

Gospel virtues and values as well as our own Benedictine Virtues underpin our HRSE curriculum. The Christian tradition describes behaviours or habits that lead to happiness, human flourishing and a closer relationship with God as virtues. These virtues are described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and fall into two groups. The theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (sometimes love is used instead) are about developing the habits of being open to the workings of the Holy Spirit and developing a deeper relationship with God through living a balanced and happy, good life. The cardinal virtues of practical wisdom (prudence), justice, fortitude and temperance help people develop habits of reason, fairness, emotional resilience and self-mastery. They are human virtues and, as such, are part of the development of people of all faiths or none as they learn how to flourish, thrive and to have a life supported by strong and caring relationships. The cardinal virtues are drawn from the teachings of Plato and Aristotle and are held in common with people of many faiths and secular beliefs. St. Thomas Aquinas attributes the theological virtues as having their foundation in God, they complete the cardinal virtues and are the way people can reach "the abundant life" (John 10:10).

Much of our school life is influenced by our own Benedictine Virtues that have been carefully selected based on the wisdom found within the Rule of St. Benedict. These include the virtues of Stewardship, Dignity, Diligence, Forgiveness, Truthfulness, and Humility. Emphasising universal applicability, these virtues transcend creed and are pertinent at every stage of life. They play a crucial role in fostering relationships and contribute to a deeper understanding, all within the framework of our distinct identity as a Benedictine school.

At St. Benedict's Catholic High School, we live out Gospel values that are inspired by the life, words and actions of Jesus Christ. These values underpin all that we are and all that we represent, especially when forging, nurturing and sustaining healthy relationships. The Gospel values guide us in our daily lives and help shape both our practices and policies, but more importantly, they help both staff and pupils to authentically encounter God in their daily lives.

All members of our school community are expected to uphold our core principles both within school and outside of the school setting. Gospel values and principles should not be restricted to the walls of a school. How is a person expected to develop themselves academically, morally and spiritually if the promotion and nurturing of these things aren't continued outside of the school setting? As a Catholic School we model tolerance, respect, forgiveness and do all that we can to support our pupils and help them grow to become intentional disciples committed to furthering the message of Christ with the skills developed within the school setting.

We pride ourselves on the high expectations we have for our pupils, both academically and concerning behavioral management. We are passionate about rewarding pupils for positive behaviour and where expectations are not met, we use restorative practice to achieve reconciliation. Our Benedictine virtue-based learning approach play a key role in this. Through the curriculum and engagement in ministry,

our pupils can reflect on the behaviours and attitudes of themselves and those around them. We also provide regular opportunities for pupils to put their faith into action, both within and beyond our school. Further details can be found on the school's website at:

[Policies – St. Benedict's School \(st-benedicts.cumbria.sch.uk\)](http://st-benedicts.cumbria.sch.uk)

Every day begins with acts of collective worship and pupils are encouraged to pray throughout the day, be that throughout their day in the silence of their own hearts in personal, intentional prayer, or within our Chapel during activities communal worship. Prayer is a time for all members of our community to take a step back and just be still, comfortable in God's embrace.

7. The Aim and Objectives of HRSE

The aim of HRSE is part of our aim to educate the complete human person. This is expressed in *Fit for mission? Schools* (2009).

The fundamental needs of the human person are the focus of Catholic education – intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual, and eschatological (Our eternal destiny). These fundamental needs can only be truly fulfilled through a rich and living encounter with the deepest truths about God and the human person.

This is why Christ and His Gospel must be the foundation of the educational project of each school and college, because He is 'the perfect Man in whom all human values find their fullest perfection' (Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*). Therefore, the Catholic school or college is called to keep the Gospel whole and alive amongst pupils, families, and staff.

HRSE should deepen the following areas of understanding.

- i) To develop self-respect and love of self.
- ii) To invite young people to develop and deepen a loving relationship with God.
- iii) To invite young people to understand that their life has a purpose.
- iv) To invite young people to develop and deepen relationships with each other based on mutual respect and care and to understand this can be an expression of God's love.
- v) To foster an understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church about how to live a full life, a life of virtue, and the place of human sexuality in living a full life, marriage and parenthood.
- vi) A strong awareness of their own safety and the nature of consent.
- vii) To understand the law in England about Equality and Marriage, appropriate to age and maturity.

Through the delivery of HRSE we will develop attitudes, personal and social skills and knowledge and understanding through:

- We will seek to develop attitudes of awe and wonder for the gift and beauty of self, respect for each other as children of God and rejoice in the goodness of God's creation.
- We will foster an atmosphere in school which celebrates the work of the Trinity through the life of the school and its relationship with the Church.
- We will teach children about the beauty of the Church's teaching about love and God's love for them which is shared in the Sacraments.
- We will sensitively share the Church's teaching about the importance of marriage and family life to live in loving relationships with others and with God.
- We will seek to develop attitudes of responsibility towards ourselves and others, recognising the dignity in all.
- We will seek to enable pupils to understand the choices they make and how they can help or harm themselves and others.
- We will encourage pupils to learn about expressing their own emotions and being respectful of the emotions and behaviours of others.
- We will encourage the whole school to be like a loving family recognising God as a merciful and generous father as Jesus taught in the Lord's Prayer.

- We will encourage everyone in the school to recognise their part in the school family and work together for reconciliation when relationships in the school falter.
- We will encourage everyone in the school to value humility, mercy and compassion and to respond with empathy to the problems of others.
- We will develop pupils' knowledge of when to say 'no' to behaviours or attitudes that harm their dignity or the dignity of others and to be responsible for managing their own risk.
- We will develop pupils' experience of what it is to be truly happy so that they begin to understand the difference between happiness and gratification, satisfying the spirit rather than the senses.
- We will teach them the virtue of patience.
- We will teach pupils about the media and their choices, about what to watch, what games to play, what rules apply, especially when using social media, and that the dignity of all does not just apply to people who are physically seen, it applies to online relationships too.
- We will encourage pupils to develop their own moral framework about accessing information online.
- We will encourage pupils to recognise the influence of peer pressure and the moral integrity required to say "no".
- We will support pupils when relationships in their lives are challenging and teach them that there are people in school who will listen if they are experiencing changes that make them frightened or uncomfortable.
- We will teach pupils about legally protected characteristics and their duty to respect difference.
- We will teach pupils about the damage that drugs and alcohol can do to relationships with the self, as well as others.
- We will teach young people that God is merciful and always waiting for us to be reconciled with him.
- We will encourage our pupils to discern what their vocation is and what God is calling them to do with the skills that have been granted to them.
- We will help pupils understand the role of the Holy Spirit on earth and in our lives and the divine gifts that He shares with us through authentic encounters with Him.
- We will ensure pupils learn and understand the core prayers that underpin our faith including the Our Father, the Glory Be, the Hail Mary and the Apostles Creed.
- We will encourage pupils to understand the significant contributions made by Saint Benedict throughout history and how to apply the lessons learnt from those contributions to their own lives today.

8. Inclusion

At St. Benedict's Catholic High School we identify that young people mature in different ways. Our teaching about relationships and sexuality is respectful of each child's starting point, their faith, culture and sexual orientation. Lessons are framed by this understanding and young people encouraged to respect difference and develop an approach of dialogue.

Pupils requiring or requesting additional support will be treated with dignity and respect and offered support through our pastoral system, our Lay Chaplain and through seeking help from other appropriate agencies.

9. Equality

The governing body has wide obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to ensure that St. Benedict's Catholic High School endeavors to do its best for all of the pupils, irrespective of ability (physical and mental), race, ethnicity, nationality, maternity, pregnancy, sex, gender identity or orientation or as looked after children.

Further details can be found on the school's website at:

[Policies – St. Benedict's School \(st-benedicts.cumbria.sch.uk\)](https://www.st-benedicts.cumbria.sch.uk) in the separate Single Equality Scheme document.

Teaching reflects the law as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the broader legal implications of decisions they may make. Further guidance is available for schools from the Catholic Education Service at <https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/guidance-for-schools/equality>. The guidance covers the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and working with students of other faiths in Catholic schools.

The 2010 Act identifies the following protected characteristics applicable to pupils, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). Age is also a protected characteristic. It does not apply to students, but governors are aware of this aspect as employers.

Catholic schools are mindful that our primary mission is to the poor and seek to alleviate any disadvantage. We focus on the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects to ensure the inclusion of all students in a way that is appropriate for them. Relationships Education and Health Education, is accessible for all pupils and is borne in mind when planning for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities who represent a minority of pupils. Teaching in HRSE is closely monitored and all schemes of work are monitored and analysed by the departments in which they are taught to ensure that the work is age appropriate and suitable for the makeup of each class. At St. Benedict's we ensure that all subjects are taught in a positive manner allowing students to develop their mental wellbeing and develop sympathy to how others may respond to specific situations. Part of this growth is done by asking questions and being open to share without judgment. We ensure quality first teaching is the most effective way to ensure that lessons are scaffolded and accessible for all. All staff have access to all SEND information on The Staff Hub and SIMS and are able to highlight and monitor the needs in each class. Staff have received CPD and training from the SENCO to give them strategies to implement in their lessons to ensure all students are able to access the learning effectively. Staff can consult with the SENCO and if extra information is required. We recognize the importance of educating the whole person and ensuring our students are fully equipped for life after school. We want to educate them to be successful members of society and as such it is important that HRSE lessons are accessible for all students. Staff are trained to notice signs of vulnerabilities and anxieties; they are equipped to signpost to in school or outside agencies to support the needs of the student.

The governors are aware that under the Equality Act action must be taken to deal with disadvantages affecting students. This will be monitored by staff members, in particular Heads of Year, Learning Mentors and linked members of SLT. If there appears to be a specific issue within a group for example, racism, sexism or discrimination against religion, action will be swiftly taken to deal with this matter. This will be done in several ways such as assemblies to challenge stereotypes, contact made home to parents to ensure the correct education is given from both home and school.

The critical characteristic of Catholic education is that all people are children of God made in His image and likeness. With this belief, underpinning school life perceived limits on students because of their characteristics must always be subject to challenge as the school is part of the Universal Catholic Church. It is through this lens we challenge stereotypes and address behaviours such as homophobia, misogyny, sexism, and ableism. We are alive to the fact that the approach of the Church may not be the same as the approach taken in other areas of life, such as social media. A clear and consistent message about human dignity must be conveyed through the whole of school life by staff, students and those who support the work of the school such as governors.

Governors understand the implications of the DfE's 2017 guidance Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges for their school. The guidance covers what sexual violence and harassment is, schools' and colleges' legal responsibilities, a whole school or college approach to safeguarding and child protection and how to respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Sadly, students can believe that sexual violence and harassment are just part of growing up. We recognise that at times during school life there will be challenges faced by our students in how they respond to the situations. To enable our students to deal with this in a

safe and appropriate way, all students take part in cyber protection assemblies where they are taught the importance of staying safe online and keeping their social media private. During our KS4 Drop Down Days and PSHE lessons, time is spent on how to recognise the signs of good and bad relationships. Advice is given on where to turn to for advice and support if a student feels that they are in an unhealthy relationship or witnesses someone else who needs help. All staff undertake safeguarding training and can access support from members of senior staff and the school counsellor if anything becomes too challenging for them. During tutor time and in assemblies we teach the students how to respect others and how to safely challenge situations they feel are unhealthy or unsafe to be in. All teaching in HRSE, including that which covers areas around the protected characteristics, is sensitive to the age, cultural background and family experiences of students. The Catholic view of human dignity challenges the cultural assumptions that can underpin prejudices, such as racism, sexism and religious discrimination. We robustly challenge homophobia, or any inequitable behaviours based on a person's sexual orientation or gender as an infringement of human dignity. Though schools will teach the Church's view on what it means to be human, and the challenges this offers to a wide range of lifestyles, the needs of the individual students remain paramount. In a Catholic school, we aim to see the child, a Child of God, as a person in need of love and care. The DfE's guidance makes specific mention of teaching about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender characteristics, which it shortens to LGBT.

"At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT, they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson. Schools are free to determine how they do this, and we expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at an appropriate point as part of this area of the curriculum."

At St. Benedict's we address questions about sexuality and gender as and when they arise. Our school's behaviour policy identifies all protected characteristics as possible triggers for aggressive or bullying behaviours. We train all staff to support students who are asking questions about themselves or others in these areas in partnership with their families and they know the legal requirements incumbent on the school with specific reference to sex or gender requirements. The dignity of each student is central to our care, and we support any questioning child and their families through a culture of listening. We offer children and their families time to discuss and explore what is best for them as individuals within our school community. As a school, we work to challenge all limiting stereotypes around sexuality and gender identities and work to enable each young person to fulfill their God given potential.

10. Programme of study

A revised programme of study has been prepared to support educators in our family of schools as they enable our young people to grow in faith and understanding of themselves, their relationship with God and with one another. The Department for Education has prepared a statutory programme for 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' which will be a compulsory requirement from September 2020. The Diocese of Lancaster began working on Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) in 2016.

The intent of the programme of study is to encourage young people to recognise their interior beauty, their dignity as a human and through this to understand and value the worth of others. We hope that this builds on the experience of the home where, as children, we all experience our first expressions of love and form our early relationships. The challenge in school life is to develop this not just in an academic sense, but as a living expression of belief ultimately, an invitation to hear the Good News.

"We must wonder! We must create an environment of wonder! We must create a climate of wonder! This task is closest to the family... Wonder is needed so that beauty might enter into human life, into society and the nation... We need to marvel at everything that is found in man." Pope St. John Paul II

Creating a climate of wonder can seem a far cry from the modern world our schools are called to serve, though this is our calling as educators in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Lancaster. Engaging with the Church's teaching about human loving enables us to share with our young people the wonder of human life and the happiness that is waiting for us in Jesus. As always, this is an invitation, a way to deepen understanding of what it means to be fully human.

The Programme of Study places the Diocese of Lancaster programme next to the statutory obligation it fulfils. Any additional material in HRSE is written in italics so it is easy to identify. Areas from the statutory plan not covered in the HRSE framework are listed at the end of the booklet. Governing bodies and head teachers should be mindful that from 2020 OfSTED will inspect the new 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' and Section 48 will continue to examine provisions in HRSE.

At St. Benedict's Catholic High School, HRSE is taught in HRSE sessions delivered by the RE staff using the TEN:TEN Life to the Full resources. Other aspects of the programme are delivered in KS3 Personal Development lessons, Science, PE and Health and Social Care. Some aspects are taught in KS4 tutor time and drop down days and through assemblies. A wide range of teaching strategies are used, and clear ground rules for discussions are established. Staff receive CPD in the school professional development time. The programmes for PSHE and HRSE can be seen on the school website and parents can access the TEN:TEN resources via their parent portal.

Parents are kept informed on the school's website as to how HRSE is delivered at St Benedict's at [HRSE – St. Benedict's School \(st-benedicts.cumbria.sch.uk\)](http://st-benedicts.cumbria.sch.uk) Lessons take account of the child protection and safeguarding policy which can be found on the website at: [Policies – St. Benedict's School \(st-benedicts.cumbria.sch.uk\)](http://st-benedicts.cumbria.sch.uk)

Progress and understanding is monitored through regular assessment in RE and science. Well-being is monitored through the pastoral system and by tracking pupils' outcomes.

11. Parents

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children. The school will support parents in this task. The role of the school should be that of assisting and completing the work of parents, furnishing children and adolescents with an evaluation of "*sexuality as value and task of the whole person, created male and female in the image of God*". (Educational Guidance in Human Love (1983) Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education n69) Children's first experience of relationships and love are in the home. At our schools we seek to work with parents and support them as their children grow and begin to develop their own character as well as experiencing changes in their physical appearance. Parents have been consulted about this policy before it was ratified by the governing body.

Parents are asked to meet with the Senior Leader for Personal Development to provide feedback on the draft policy.

The school involves and supports parents in learning about HRSE by sharing curriculum overviews on the website and writing to parents at the beginning of the academic year to share the login details to the TEN:TEN parent portal.

Information about HRSE is contained in the school prospectus and most of the programme of study is developed through the ethos of the school. However, at times, areas of particular sensitivity, such as puberty, will benefit from additional parental support and at such times, letters are sent home via Edulink and parents may be invited into school to discuss the content of HRSE lessons.

Right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw)

Parents have the right to request that their child not participate in some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request, the headteacher will discuss

the application with parents and ensure that they understand the nature and purpose of the curriculum in a Catholic context. A discussion follows, as appropriate, involving the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. We record and document this process using SIMs.

The Headteacher discusses with parents the benefits of receiving this education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. For example, the possible social or emotional impact of withdrawal, the likelihood of them hearing a peer's version of the content, rather than the teacher's. However, parents may prefer to discuss sex education to their child at home instead.

Following discussions, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. This process is applicable for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the headteacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision. Parents wishing to exercise their right to withdraw their child should contact the Pastoral Lead for Transition if their child is in Year 6, or the Senior Leader for Personal Development.

12. Teaching HRSE

The Senior Leader for Personal Development is responsible for the co-ordination, monitoring and line management of HRSE with the support of the link Governor.

Teaching and learning about human relationships is part of the life of the school. HRSE is delivered by RE staff using the TEN:TEN resources, Science lessons, PE and Computer Science lessons and in Health and Social Care, Personal Development lessons, Drop Down Days and in tutor time.

Staff are involved in fostering attitudes, living Gospel virtues and shaping behaviour base on a Christian Understanding of how to lead a good life. Staff are called to be role models of the school's ethos in their relationships with other staff members, their conduct towards parents and their care for the children in the school. Staff who are not Catholic themselves must conduct their behaviour in school in accordance with the vision and mission of the school.

Sometimes, the children's learning will be best supported by using other agencies, such as the school nurse, or other visitors to school. Such visitors will be guided to read the protocol for visitors and agree to it.

13. Dealing with difficult questions

The Governing Body desires that HRSE lessons take place in a positive framework, where students experience a growing appreciation for wellbeing, and that of others, and a deeper understanding that the Church teaches a path of the wholeness of mind, body and spirit. Part of this is creating an atmosphere where questions can be asked openly, knowing that their questions will be answered and understanding that staff or other students will not judge these questions. It is vital; therefore, that teachers invest time in creating this framework of mutual trust and care while respecting personal information. The HRSE co-ordinator must be given access to train and support to facilitate teachers to enable such discussions by creating carefully negotiated ground rules and distancing strategies. The Department for Education (2000) offers the following guidelines for dealing with questions.

- Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a class setting. Many teachers are concerned about responding to unexpected questions or comments from pupils in a whole-class situation. Having a set of ground rules should reduce the chances of this happening, but teachers will need support and training so that they prepare for the unexpected. For example:

- If a question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupil of the ground rules. If the pupil needs further support, the teacher can refer them to the appropriate person, such as a school counsellor, school nurse, helpline, or an outside agency or service;
- If a teacher doesn't know the answer to a question, it is essential to acknowledge this, and to suggest that the pupil or teacher or both together research the subject later;
- If a problem is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher will acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. In this way, the pupil will feel they have received respectful treatment, but the rest of the class will not have to listen to personal experience or inappropriate information. To maintain trust and respect the teacher must remember to talk with the pupil later; and
- If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the school's child protection procedures.¹

Sensitive subjects in HRSE always need to be framed so that the young people who are participating know that there is pastoral support if any of the issues discussed make them feel the need to talk further or share confidential information. The safeguarding framework of the school will frame this, and it is paramount that all staff teaching HRSE have up to date safeguarding professional development.

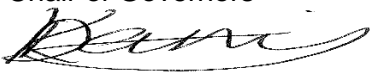
Questions asked by students that are a cause for concern for the teacher, for example, because of their explicit or graphic content, will be addressed following the school's safeguarding policy and confidentiality procedures.

[Policies – St. Benedict's School \(st-benedicts.cumbria.sch.uk\)](http://st-benedicts.cumbria.sch.uk)

The school will ensure that this policy is available for all staff, governors, parents and students and the confidential nature of how to obtain advice and guidance as a result of any issues or questions that may arise.

Students will be encouraged to talk to their parents or carers about issues and questions that arise as part of the programme. It will be made clear to all that unconditional confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where illegal or abusive concerns come to light, and these will be dealt with under the terms of the relevant policies on the school website.

Name: Kayleigh Daniels
Position: Chair of Governors

Signed: 

Date of ratification: 1 March 2024
Proposed review date: 1 March 2026
