



RELATIONSHIPS AND HEALTH EDUCATION AT PRIMARY SCHOOL

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

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

Towards the end of the Pentecost term (2025), the Department for Education (DfE) published updated statutory guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). This guidance replaces the current 2019 guidance, and takes effect from September 2026.

For primary pupils, the updated guidance places a stronger focus on **online safety and wellbeing, the use of accurate terminology for body parts (including genitalia), and the introduction of personal safety around water, roads, and railways.**

There is also greater emphasis on helping children **understand change and loss, including bereavement, and on developing communication skills, assertiveness, and the confidence to express personal needs and boundaries.**

Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools but the DfE recommends that it is taught in years 5 and/or 6 in line with content about conception and birth, which forms part of the national curriculum for science. It is important that primary schools consult with parents about the content of anything that will be taught within sex education. Parents have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education but this should be discussed with the school.

For further information on 'relationships and health education', [click here](#)



In our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Nottingham, this content will be delivered as part of the 'whole curriculum' where we seek to develop each child's knowledge and understanding of themselves 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. We teach this precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. The belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in a Catholic school.

Our approach to Relationships and Health Education is therefore rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian anthropology (the search for the unique reflection of God in each person).

The programme suggested for use in our schools 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.

We have based our curriculum on the model curriculum produced by the Catholic Education Service. It will be taught through the following themes:

Created and loved by God

The Christian imperative to love self, made in the image and likeness of God, shows the importance of valuing and understanding oneself as the basis for personal relationships.

Created to love others

God is love. We are created out of love for love. The command to love is the basis of all Christian morality.

Created to live in community (local, national and global)

The command to love one another as God loves us is the basis of all Christian morality. Human beings are relational by nature and live in the wider community. Through our exchange with others, our mutual service and through dialogues, we attempt to proclaim and extend the Kingdom of God for the good of individual and society.



The Church has always acknowledged that **parents** are the 'first teachers' of their children. Therefore, the role of Catholic schools is to work in partnership with parents at all times and to 'complement' but not replace the primary role of parents.

In order to do this, schools will involve parents in the review of their policy on this area and parents will always have the right to express an opinion. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Health Education or the Relationships element of Relationships and Sex Education but may request that their child is withdrawn from some or all of the lessons on Sex Education. However, before you do so, please speak to your child's school as it is important that you understand precisely how this will be delivered. The science curriculum also includes content on human development, including reproduction, from which there is no right to withdraw.

In order for Catholic Relationships Education and Health Education to be fully effective, we believe that it needs to:

- be faithful to the Church's vision of human wholeness whilst recognising the contemporary context in which we live today;
- involve parents as they are primary educators of their child;
- provide a positive view of human sexuality and dignity of the human person;
- equip young people with the ability to make practical judgements about the right choice to make in particular circumstances;
- explore and promote virtues which are essential to promoting respect and dignity;
- be delivered in an age appropriate way which reflects the development of the child;
- be part of the cross-curricular work in both primary and secondary schools;
- be sensitive to the needs of the individual pupil and recognise the mix of pupils with different sexual orientations, genders and family backgrounds in each class.

If you would like to discuss this in greater detail, please contact your child's school.



Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service

The Diocesan Centre | Mornington Crescent | Mackworth | Derby | DE22 4BD

www.dioceseofnottingham.uk/education