

SAINT BEDE'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
LYTHAM



HRSE Policy
(Human Relationships and
Sex Education Policy)

1. Background information

St. Bede's is first and foremost a Catholic school, founded to serve the families and parishes in the Diocese of Lancaster. We seek to fulfil our Mission Statement, in accordance with the rites, practices and observances of the Catholic faith.

Our Mission Statement:

We aim to reflect the true Christian values proclaimed in the Gospel and seek to provide a caring community in which young people can grow as balanced individuals, morally, intellectually and spiritually, and so participate fully in the real world.

All Human, Relationship and Sex Education will be in accordance with the Church's moral teaching. It will emphasise the central importance of marriage and family, whilst acknowledging that all pupils have a fundamental right to have their life respected. All teaching is in accordance with the 2010 Equality Act and will prepare pupils to participate fully in the real world.

The school believes that the education and formation of children is a responsibility shared by parents, teachers and the Church. We recognise that parents are the first educators of their children and we are committed to supporting them in this task.

*Education, in the first place, is the duty of the family, which 'is the school of richest humanity'. Parents are in pride of place in establishing a relationship of trust and dialogue with their children in a manner appropriate to their age and development. **Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education***

Our role will be to assist and complete the work of parents, to enable our pupils to recognise their God-given dignity, equipping 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)

Formation is present in all aspects of the School's life—the approach to every task, every aspect of teaching and learning, every form of order, discipline and control, every relationship. We recognise our responsibility to provide opportunities that support the formation of each person in our community, through integrating human development and Gospel values.

HRSE will deepen the following areas of understanding:

- to develop self-respect, love of self and others recognising that we are all formed in the image of God.
- to invite young people to develop and deepen a loving relationship with God.
- to invite young people to understand that their life has a purpose and we must each grow and develop irrespective of circumstances, gender or race.
- to invite young people to deepen and develop their relationship with one another based on mutual care and respect, as a reflection of God's love.
- to foster an understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church and how to live a full life, a life of virtue, and the place of human sexuality in living a full life, marriage and parenthood.
- to develop a strong awareness of their own safety and the nature of consent. To have an understanding of the law in England about Equality and Marriage, appropriate to age and maturity.

2. Vision for Human Relationships and Sex Education

‘Christian education aims to promote the realisation of man and woman through the development of all their being, incarnate spirits, and of the gifts of nature and of grace by which they are enriched by God. A true ‘formation’, is not limited to the informing of the intellect, but must pay particular attention to the will, to feelings and emotions. In order to move to maturation in affective-sexual life, self control is necessary, which presupposes such virtues as modesty, temperance, respect for self and for others, openness to one's neighbour.

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education

At St. Bede's we are inspired by Jesus to be the very best we can be. We look after one another and show respect and love through our relationships with one another. Jesus is invited into our hearts. In the Beatitudes, Jesus invites us to lead a full life with Him by explaining what makes people blessed or happy. This is about understanding how loving our neighbour enables us to be happy too. Therefore, having a good relationship with ourselves and the other people in our lives makes us grow and flourish and we respect that everyone is a unique and beautiful part of God's creation. We are all children of God, called to grow in love for Him through the person of Jesus Christ and to spread the Good News through the action of the Holy Spirit.

3. Procedures

The following groups are in the process of consultation as part of producing this policy:

- Staff (through HRSE and PHSCE Coordinator)
- Governing body
- Parents
- Diocesan Education Service
- School council (meeting with HRSE Coordinator) (To be completed in the Spring Term)
- Pupil voice (To be completed in the Spring Term)

In consultation with the Governing Body, the policy will be implemented in February 2023, reviewed every two years, by the Headteacher, Head of Catholic Life and Mission, PHSCE Coordinator and the Governing Body. The next review date will be February 2025.

The policy will be circulated to all members of the Governing Body and is accessible to all members of staff. The school will communicate to parents through a statement about HRSE teaching and details of where to obtain a full copy of the policy upon request. Upon completion and of any amendments the Education Service will be sent a copy of the school's HRSE policy and it is the duty of the Governing Body to ensure that this is up to date.

4. Rationale

As a secondary school in the Diocese of Lancaster Education Service, we use the term Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) as we believe that relationship education is about all aspects of growing a fulfilled and happy life, with sexual education being a dimension of this greater whole. For example, the defining belief of Christianity is that God adopted human form. 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, our relationship with our own bodies is not casual but infused with the Holy Spirit. 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 it is part of complete human formation. Education about human love is no less a part of a Catholic school's responsibility than teaching about any other curriculum subject.

At St. Bede's Catholic High School we teach young people about how to form relationships, including understanding loving relationships and acknowledging that young people's first experience of love is in the home. We encourage the young people in our school/college to recognise that they are all children of God and that each person shares a God given dignity. As they mature, we encourage them to follow the example of Jesus and live lives inspired by the Gospel virtues, enabling them to follow His commandment to '*Love your neighbour as yourself*' (Mark 12:31). We also encourage our pupils to recognise that God's love for us is so great, He is waiting to forgive us.

'We are all sinners, but God heals us with an abundance of grace and mercy.' Pope Francis

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 (DfE) 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.' p.8

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 website (<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) development)
- 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 help children and young people develop. 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 below summarises statutory obligations:

Relationships Education	Relationships and Sex Education	Health 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).	<p>All maintained schools including schools with a sixth form, academies, free schools, non-maintained special schools and alternative provision, including pupil referral units.</p> <p>The statutory requirement to provide Health Education does not apply to independent schools – PSHE is already compulsory as independent schools must meet the Independent School Standards as set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.</p> <p>Independent schools, however, may find the principles in the guidance on Health Education helpful in planning an age-appropriate curriculum</p>

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

Gospel virtues and values underpin the 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 work 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).

At Saint Bede’s we live out and acknowledge the centrality of the Gospel values and virtues shared in the Beatitudes, throughout the life of the school by:

Faithfulness and Integrity

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Dignity and Compassion

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Humility and Gentleness

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Truth and Justice

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Forgiveness and Mercy

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Purity and Holiness

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Tolerance and Peace

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Staff and pupils are encouraged to become living witnesses of Christ by supporting and modelling the Gospel values and virtues. Through all aspects of our community interactions (e.g. lessons, assemblies, liturgies, meetings) all members of our school community are encouraged to be thoughtful and reflective about their attitudes and behaviour towards themselves and others.

Pupils are encouraged by the values of the Gospel to embody what it is to ‘be a Bede’ and to develop self confidence and a level of self control. Pupils grow in a whole school environment, learning to distinguish right from wrong through the ethos of the school.

As a living faith community all members of our school are able to express what they believe about God in an atmosphere that is free from criticism and judgement.

We recognise that Jesus' actions and teachings inspire us to preach the Gospel message in our life through word and deed. As a faith community we aim to live by the Golden Rule:

"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12)

We are a community who live together in fairness, who seek to find Jesus in all things, because for us as believers in Christ:

'He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him.' (Colossians 1:15-17)

We reflect our love for God through loving our neighbour; our values as a living Catholic community encourage us to show love and care for ourselves and others because Jesus taught us that:

'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' (Matthew 25:40)

Our school community is inspired to recognise the importance of the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. We recognise our calling to help our neighbours with their material and physical needs (e.g. by feeding the hungry, helping to provide shelter to the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, give alms to the poor) and to support their emotional and spiritual needs (e.g. by instructing, advising, consoling, by comforting, by being a community of forgiveness and to bear wrongs with patience).

We take the time and opportunities afforded to us to learn the importance of prayer so that it enables us to make space for God in our lives and by doing so this offers opportunities for reflection and growth.

We recognise our role and dignity as part of the Church, who are the Body of Christ. We challenge things that cause divisions, jealousies and misunderstandings and work to prevent marginalisation because these things prevent us from growing as the Body of Christ. We are each called to appreciate the gifts and the quality of others in our communities. We recognise that we are brothers and sisters in the Holy Spirit, we pray that His gifts will help us to really live as the Body of Christ, to live as a united family, a family that is the Body of Christ, a community that strives to be a beautiful and visible sign of the love of Christ by deepening ourselves in faith, hope and charity.

7. The Aim and Objectives of HRSE

The aim of HRSE is part of our wider aim to educate the complete human person. 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).

St. Bede's Catholic High School is called to keep the Gospel whole and alive amongst pupils, families, and staff.

HRSE will deepen the following areas of understanding.

- To develop self-respect and love of self.
- To invite young people to develop and deepen a loving relationship with God.
- To invite young people to understand that their life has a purpose.
- 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.
- 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.
- A strong awareness of their own safety and the nature of consent.
- To have an understanding of the law in England about Equality and Marriage, appropriate to age and maturity.

HRSE will develop attitudes, personal and social skills and knowledge and understanding.

Through love of God:

- 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 as a way to live in loving relationships with others and with God.

Through love of others:

- 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 students 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.

8. Inclusion

At St. Bede's 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.

Under the provisions of the Equality Act, St Bede's Catholic High School does not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). This is further stated in our Equality Policy (updated October 2022).

For pupils who require additional support in relation to their own sexuality or gender identity, our school community offers a wide variety of support through areas such as our Chaplaincy team, Mr Gabrasadig (Deputy Headteacher), Mrs Abberley (SENDCo) or our Year Leaders. As a school community we seek to nurture the whole child, as such, defining pupils by their sexuality or gender identity would be limiting their uniqueness and development, the aim of our school is to encourage pupils to truly understand the self. We are committed to ensuring that all our pupils feel valued, safe and free from prejudice.

9. Equality

The governing body has wide obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to ensure that Saint Bede's endeavours to do its best for all of the pupils, irrespective of ability (physical and cognitive), race, ethnicity, nationality, maternity, pregnancy, sex, gender identity or orientation or whether they are looked after children.

Saint Bede's complies with the regulation under the Equality Act 2010 and has a published Single Equalities Policy and plan and has sought guidance from the Catholic Education Service (<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 should be aware of this aspect as employers.

As a Catholic school, we should be mindful that our primary mission is to the poor and to seek to alleviate any disadvantage. We also give appropriate 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, RSE and Health Education, must be accessible for all pupils and must be borne in mind when planning for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities who represent a significant minority of pupils.

The schemes of work which underpin the school's teaching of HRSE are regularly reviewed by the HRSE team (including the HRSE Coordinator and the Head of Catholic Life and Mission) and the PHSCE Coordinator, and periodically by the SEND Coordinator. This ensures that education in this area prepares students for adulthood, ensuring that SEND pupils are supported to deal with aggressive behaviour, exploitation and bullying.

Quality First Teaching in all classrooms ensures that work is accessible for all pupils. Pupils with SEND have Individual Education Plans which are shared with teaching staff to enable specific strategies to be put in place in order to meet individual needs. All pupils with SEND are supported and monitored within the Special Educational Needs department and SENCo to ensure that they make progress, both academically and emotionally. Teachers are advised to ensure that language is suitable for the ability level of pupils in their classes and key vocabulary are regularly revisited. In some cases, pupils may require a personal plan for their education in this area to match their needs and stage of development, reflecting statutory requirements, and this will be monitored by the HRSE Coordinator and by the member of staff who is primarily responsible for the support that pupil is receiving, as listed above.

Furthermore, we recognise that at different times all of our pupils can be experiencing acute periods of vulnerability due to family circumstances, for example bereavement, relocation, specific mental or physical health problems. At St Bede's we have a strong pastoral team who monitor their year groups and share information, where appropriate, in order to maximize the support for pupils in these circumstances. This may involve in-house support or referrals to outside agencies.

Monitoring of academic progress acknowledges an awareness of these differences by looking at the progress made by different groups within the school community. Monitoring of the pastoral care and needs of pupils is done through the work of the Behaviour for Learning Manager in conjunction with the Deputy Headteacher and Year Leaders, paying particular attention to bullying incidents which might be based on protected characteristics.

The critical characteristic of Catholic education is that all people are children of God. 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 that schools such as ours must always challenge stereotypes and address behaviours such as homophobia, misogyny and sexism. We are aware of 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 is always conveyed through the whole of school life by staff, students and those who support the work of the school such as governors.

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 should challenge the cultural assumptions that can underpin prejudices, such as racism, sexism and religious discrimination. St. Bede's Catholic High School will robustly challenge homophobia or any inequitable behaviours based on a person's sexual orientation or gender as an infringement of human dignity. Though schools such as ours 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 will remain paramount. In a Catholic school such as ours, 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. The guidance states,

'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. Bede's Catholic High School 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 pupils who are asking questions about themselves or others in these areas, in partnership with their families, and staff know the legal requirements incumbent on the school with specific reference to sex or gender requirements. The dignity of each pupil is central to our care and we support any questioning child and their families through a culture of listening and seeing them as a person. We do not rush to label but 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 fulfil their God given potential.

Governors at St. Bede's 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. These beliefs are challenged and a culture of respect fostered on reciprocal dignity with specific reference to the age of the students. Safeguarding training occurs annually for teaching and associate staff and up to date information on safeguarding issues is disseminated in staff briefings and/or via emails.

10. Programme of study

The Diocese of Lancaster has a programme of study for its family of schools, to enable young people to grow in faith and understanding of themselves, their relationship with God and 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 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 lived 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.

It is envisaged that this programme will be taught in discrete lessons, in cross curricular lessons, particularly Religious Education, PHSCE and Science and be fundamentally embedded in the ethos of the school through assemblies, classroom discussions and the centring of all relationships in school on the person of Jesus Christ. The programme of study is based on the teachings of the Church and aims to help young people develop their sense of purpose and character. It should be taught as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and allow children to express alternative beliefs and viewpoints where they hold such views. The programme of study will be supported by published resources, recommended by the Diocese, as well as those created by the school.

A detailed Programme of Study will be added as an annex to this policy following a period of review and revision.

11. Parents

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children. The school should 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) Students' first experience of relationships and love are in the home.

At St. Bede's 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 informed about this policy during the period of consultation prior to ratification by the governing body.

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, it would be good practice for the Headteacher to discuss the application with parents and ensure that they understand the nature and purpose of the curriculum in a Catholic context. A discussion should follow, as appropriate, involving the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. The outcome of the discussion will be recorded as there is the option for the child to request access to the curriculum in their final school year as noted below.

Good practice includes the Headteacher discussing 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 etc. However, parents may prefer to discuss sex education with 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 should 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. A process for the parental right to withdraw will form part of the policy.

The school endeavours to involve and support parents in learning about HRSE and we share the programme of study. When visitors relevant to these topics are coming to school we communicate this with parents, if organisations such as LIFE are coming into school then letters are sent home to inform parents that a sensitive subject is to be taught. If parents wish to withdraw their children we ask that they must inform the HRSE Coordinator in a timely fashion; this is to ensure that there is sufficient time to make alternative provision(s).

12. Teaching HRSE:

The Headteacher is responsible for leadership of HRSE but delegates its co-ordination and monitoring of the programme to the Head of Catholic Life and Ethos, Miss Newsham, who is the designated HRSE Coordinator. The monitoring of HRSE includes a named foundation governor, in this case .

HRSE is taught through PSHE and Citizenship, RE and Science lessons and on enrichment days, for example in Challenge Week. Sometimes, learning will be best supported by using other agencies, such as the school nurse, or other visitors to school. Such visitors will only be used where they understand and agree to uphold the teachings and principles of the Catholic Church.

All staff are involved in fostering attitudes, living Gospel virtues and shaping behaviour based 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.

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 their wellbeing, and that of others, and a deeper understanding that the Church teaches a path of 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 knowing that these questions will not be judged by staff or other students. It is vital, therefore, that time is invested in creating this framework of mutual trust and care, whilst respecting personal information.

The HRSE Coordinator must be given access to support and training to facilitate teachers to enable such discussions by creating carefully negotiated ground rules and distancing strategies. The Department for Education (2000) offers the following guidance for dealing with questions.

Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole 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 are prepared 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 her or him 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 important to acknowledge this, and to suggest that the pupil or teacher or both together research the question later;
- If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. In this way, the pupil will feel they have been treated with respect, 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.

Sex and Relationships Guidance, 4.5 'Dealing with questions' 0116/2000

When any sensitive subjects are covered in HRSE they will always 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. This should always be done within the safeguarding framework of the school 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, should be addressed in accordance with the school's safeguarding policy and confidentiality procedures. Information relating to this can be accessed from Miss Cochrane. All relevant policies are in the staff folder on Firefly including copies of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

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 (Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Social Network and Social Media Policy).

14. Evaluation and Review

Evaluation of HRSE lessons will take place through PHSCE assessment provision, staff and pupil voice and HRSE team planning and evaluation time.

The use of outside agencies will also always involve pupil voice to evaluate the effectiveness of the experiences we are providing for our young people.

The HRSE Coordinator, PHSCE Coordinator will, where possible, conduct learning walks during HRSE, Child Development and Science lessons and meet with relevant line manager/governors during governing body committee meetings and improvement plan meetings.

This policy will be reviewed in _____.