



**Relationships, Sex and Health Education
(RSHE)
and Personal, Social, Health and Economic
Education (PSHE) Policy
2026–27**



St Matthew's Catholic Primary School

“Love, Learn and Shine Together with Jesus.”

Co-Chairs of Governors	Cathy Sargent and Maria Murphy
Headteacher	Mrs C Sime
RSHE / PSHE Lead	Mr Mark Edwards
Date adopted	Autumn 2026
Review date	Autumn 2027

Mission Statement

“Love, Learn and Shine Together with Jesus.”

1. Rationale and Catholic Context

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

At St Matthew's Catholic Primary School, Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) are rooted in our Catholic understanding of the human person. Every child is made in the image and likeness of God and has an intrinsic dignity that must be recognised, protected and celebrated.

Our provision supports the formation of the whole person: spiritual, moral, social, emotional, intellectual and physical. It aims to help children build loving and respectful relationships, make safe and healthy choices, develop resilience, understand themselves and others, and grow in virtue and responsibility.

RSHE is taught in fidelity to the teaching of the Catholic Church and with appropriate regard to statutory guidance. It prepares pupils for life in modern Britain while maintaining a clear Catholic vision of human dignity, relationships, family life, the sanctity of life and the common good.

Parents and carers are recognised as the primary educators of their children. The school therefore seeks to work in close partnership with families, particularly when sensitive aspects of RSE are taught.

2. Policy Intent

This policy sets out how St Matthew's provides a coherent, age-appropriate and inclusive programme of RSHE and PSHE. It explains the relationship between our Catholic RSE programme, Journey in Love, the PSHE Association resources used for PSHE and Health Education, the Religious Education Directory (RED), and the wider curriculum and personal-development offer.

Our curriculum is designed so that taught content and wider experiences reinforce one another. This contributes to pupils' personal development, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, safeguarding knowledge, character formation and readiness for the next stage of education.

3. Aims

- to help every pupil recognise their dignity and the dignity of others as children of God;
- to develop healthy, respectful and loving relationships built on kindness, honesty, trust, boundaries and responsibility;
- to provide accurate, age-appropriate knowledge about relationships, health, bodies, puberty and growing up;
- to give pupils the vocabulary and confidence to talk about their bodies, feelings, relationships and safety;
- to support mental wellbeing, emotional regulation, resilience and positive self-esteem;
- to teach pupils how to keep themselves safe online and offline, including how and where to seek help;
- to help pupils understand difference, equality and the importance of treating every person with respect;
- to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life;
- to support parents and carers in their role as the primary educators of their children; and
- to ensure that RSHE and PSHE are fully consistent with the Catholic character, mission and values of St Matthew's.

4. Statutory and Church Requirements

The school provides statutory Relationships Education and Health Education in line with the relevant provisions of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Department for Education statutory guidance. We also have regard to the Equality Act 2010, safeguarding requirements, and current national guidance for schools.

As a Catholic school, St Matthew's also follows guidance from the Catholic Education Service, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Catholic guidance confirms that RSE should be well taught, age appropriate, rooted in the dignity of the human person and delivered in close partnership with parents.

The school keeps the curriculum and this policy under review so that provision remains faithful to Church teaching, legally compliant, developmentally appropriate and responsive to the real lives and safeguarding needs of pupils.

5. Our Curriculum Framework

5.1 Journey in Love – our RSE programme

Journey in Love is the core programme through which St Matthew's delivers Catholic Relationship and Sex Education (RSE). It provides the distinctive Catholic framework for learning about relationships, the human person, growing and changing, family life, love, responsibility and, where age appropriate, sexual development.

Journey in Love is not treated as an isolated or occasional unit. Its themes are planned carefully across the year and are connected to the wider RSHE/PSHE curriculum so that pupils encounter consistent language, values and safeguarding messages. Sensitive content is taught at an age-appropriate stage and in a way that is faithful to the teaching of the Catholic Church.

In Year 6, the non-statutory sex education element of Journey in Love includes teaching about sexual intercourse within the context of loving, committed relationships, human dignity and the Catholic understanding of marriage and family life. Parents are informed before this content is taught and have the right to request withdrawal from this non-statutory element, as explained later in this policy.

5.2 PSHE Association resources – our wider PSHE curriculum

The school uses high-quality resources from the PSHE Association as the principal planning resource for the wider PSHE curriculum. These materials are selected and adapted to meet the needs of St Matthew's pupils and the local context, while remaining consistent with our Catholic ethos and statutory RSHE expectations.

PSHE Association resources support progressive teaching across areas such as mental wellbeing, managing feelings, friendships, respectful relationships, online safety, physical health, healthy choices, personal safety, money, careers and aspirations, transition, first aid and preparation for life beyond primary school.

Teachers do not use resources mechanically. Staff exercise professional judgement, adapt content for age and developmental stage, and ensure that examples, language and discussion are appropriate for a Catholic primary school.

5.3 Religious Education Directory (RED)

All year groups at St Matthew's are now teaching through the Religious Education Directory (RED). The RED is the school's Religious Education curriculum and is distinct from RSHE/PSHE, but there are important and purposeful connections between the subjects.

Through the RED, pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding of Scripture, Catholic belief, the human person, vocation, family, dignity, love, service, forgiveness, justice and Catholic Social Teaching. These foundations help pupils understand the values that underpin Journey in Love and the wider RSHE/PSHE curriculum.

Where appropriate, teachers make explicit links between learning in the RED and RSHE/PSHE. However, statutory RSHE content is planned and monitored in its own right so that it is not assumed to be covered simply because a related theme appears in Religious Education.

5.4 Wider curriculum and personal development

RSHE and PSHE also connect with Science, Computing and online safety, Physical Education, the EYFS curriculum, safeguarding education, Catholic Social Teaching, prayer and liturgy, pupil leadership, educational visits, enrichment and the school's wider personal-development programme. This helps pupils see that healthy relationships, wellbeing, safety and responsible citizenship are part of everyday life rather than stand-alone topics.

6. Curriculum Content

The primary Relationships Education curriculum includes the following statutory areas, taught progressively and in an age-appropriate way:

- families and people who care for me;
- caring friendships;
- respectful and kind relationships;
- online safety and awareness; and
- being safe.

Health Education and the wider PSHE curriculum include age-appropriate learning about mental wellbeing, emotional health, physical health and fitness, healthy eating, health protection, personal safety, basic first aid, online wellbeing, developing bodies and other relevant aspects of keeping healthy and safe.

The curriculum is adapted as guidance develops so that pupils receive the knowledge they need to navigate new and emerging issues, particularly in relation to online life, technology and safeguarding.

7. Teaching and Learning

RSHE and PSHE are taught through planned lessons, class discussion, stories, scenarios, reflection, role play, problem solving and age-appropriate practical activities. Staff establish clear ground rules for sensitive discussion and create a classroom climate in which pupils can ask questions without embarrassment or fear of ridicule.

Teaching is factual, balanced, respectful and appropriate to pupils' age and maturity. It does not encourage pupils to adopt particular lifestyles or identities. Within this framework, the school is clear about the Catholic teaching that shapes our curriculum and equally clear that every pupil and family must be treated with dignity and respect.

Teachers use correct anatomical and safeguarding vocabulary where appropriate. If pupils ask questions beyond the planned curriculum, staff respond honestly and sensitively, taking account of age, safeguarding needs, Church teaching and the role of parents. Where necessary, a teacher may explain that a question is better discussed individually or with parents rather than answered in detail in front of the whole class.

8. Safeguarding

RSHE and PSHE are important parts of the school's safeguarding provision. Pupils are taught how to recognise safe and unsafe situations, identify trusted adults, understand personal boundaries, recognise inappropriate behaviour, seek help, report concerns and use technology safely.

Staff are aware that discussions may lead to a safeguarding disclosure. Any concern or disclosure is managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Teachers must never promise confidentiality to a pupil where a safeguarding concern is raised.

9. Inclusion, Equality and SEND

All pupils are entitled to high-quality RSHE and PSHE. The curriculum is inclusive and promotes the dignity and worth of every person. Pupils learn that families and individual circumstances may differ and that people should be treated with kindness, dignity and respect.

Teaching supports pupils to understand the protected characteristics in an age-appropriate way and to reject bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. This is taught within the school's Catholic ethos and commitment to the dignity of every human person.

For pupils with SEND, teachers make reasonable adjustments and adapt teaching so that pupils can access the age-appropriate knowledge they need to keep themselves healthy and safe. Adaptations take account of developmental need without denying pupils important safeguarding information linked to their chronological age.

10. Working with Parents and Carers

St Matthew's recognises parents and carers as the primary educators of their children. We aim to build trust through openness, advance information and opportunities for dialogue.

- This policy and curriculum information are made available to parents and carers.
- Parents are consulted on RSE provision and on significant changes to the programme.
- The school provides advance information about sensitive RSE content, including the Year 6 non-statutory sex education element.
- Parents may contact the school if they would like to discuss lesson content or resources.
- The school will review its provision with parents at least annually and will respond reasonably to concerns while maintaining statutory duties and fidelity to Catholic teaching.

11. Right to Withdraw

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from statutory Relationships Education, Health Education or from content taught as part of the statutory Science curriculum.

Parents do have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from the non-statutory sex education element taught in Year 6 through Journey in Love. Requests should be made in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will meet with parents to discuss the request, the content of the lessons and the benefits of participation before a final decision is made.

Where a pupil is withdrawn from non-statutory sex education, the school will provide appropriate alternative work and ensure that the pupil continues to receive all statutory Relationships Education, Health Education and Science content.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

- approves the policy and holds leaders to account for its implementation;
- ensures provision reflects the Catholic character of the school and statutory requirements; and
- receives appropriate information about monitoring, consultation and curriculum development.

The Headteacher

- ensures RSHE/PSHE is taught consistently across the school;
- ensures the required Headteacher statement and parent consultation arrangements are in place;
- supports staff training and resourcing; and
- manages requests for withdrawal from non-statutory sex education.

The RSHE/PSHE Lead

- coordinates and reviews the curriculum;
- ensures Journey in Love remains central to RSE provision;
- supports staff in using and adapting PSHE Association resources;
- ensures clear links are made with the RED and wider personal development without creating unnecessary duplication;
- monitors planning, teaching, pupil voice and outcomes; and
- keeps leaders and governors informed about developments in guidance and practice.

Teaching Staff

- teach RSHE/PSHE sensitively and confidently in accordance with this policy;
- use Journey in Love for RSE and agreed PSHE Association resources for wider PSHE;
- adapt teaching appropriately for pupils' age, maturity and SEND;
- model respectful relationships and language;
- monitor pupils' understanding and address misconceptions; and
- follow safeguarding procedures when concerns arise.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage respectfully, listen to others, use appropriate language, follow class ground rules and understand that sensitive discussions should be treated with dignity and care.

13. Assessment and Progression

Assessment in RSHE/PSHE is primarily formative. Teachers establish what pupils already know, identify misconceptions, revisit important concepts and evaluate whether pupils can apply knowledge to age-appropriate situations. Evidence may include discussion, written work, scenarios, reflection activities, pupil voice and teacher observation.

Assessment is used to inform future teaching rather than to grade pupils' personal beliefs, family circumstances or private experiences. Monitoring focuses on whether pupils are developing secure knowledge, appropriate vocabulary, safe behaviours and the ability to explain where to seek help.

14. Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation and impact of RSHE/PSHE are monitored through a proportionate range of activities, which may include planning scrutiny, work scrutiny, learning walks, pupil voice, staff discussion, parent feedback and review of safeguarding or pastoral themes emerging within school.

Leaders consider how well the taught curriculum and the wider personal-development programme reinforce one another. Particular attention is given to the quality and consistency of Journey in Love, effective use of PSHE Association resources, progression across year groups, inclusion, safeguarding and the links with the RED and Catholic life of the school.

The policy is reviewed regularly and whenever significant statutory, diocesan or safeguarding guidance changes. Governors ratify the policy and receive updates as appropriate.

15. Resources

- Journey in Love – the school’s core Catholic RSE programme;
- PSHE Association resources – the principal planning resource for the wider PSHE curriculum;
- Religious Education Directory (RED) and Archdiocese of Liverpool RE materials;
- NSPCC Underwear Rule / PANTS and other approved safeguarding resources;
- approved online-safety and Computing resources, including age-appropriate CEOP/NCA materials where relevant;
- Science curriculum resources; and
- other carefully selected resources that are consistent with Catholic teaching, statutory guidance, safeguarding expectations and pupils’ developmental needs.

16. Key Reference Documents

- Department for Education: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education – statutory guidance, including the 2025 update implemented from September 2026;
- Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales: Relationship and Sex Education in Catholic Schools (updated February 2026);
- Catholic Education Service model frameworks and guidance for RSE in Catholic schools;
- Archdiocese of Liverpool: RSHE Catholic Policy and Practice guidance (January 2026);
- Equality Act 2010;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education and current school safeguarding guidance;
- PSHE Association curriculum resources and guidance; and
- Religious Education Directory (RED).

Appendix 1 – How the Curriculum Fits Together at St Matthew’s

Curriculum strand	Main resource / framework	Primary purpose	How it connects
RSE	Journey in Love	Catholic Relationship and Sex Education: dignity, relationships, family, growing and changing, puberty and age-appropriate sex education.	Provides the Catholic RSE framework and values that sit at the heart of the policy.
PSHE / Health Education	PSHE Association resources, adapted for St Matthew’s	Mental and physical wellbeing, safety, online life, relationships, citizenship, money, careers, transition and wider life skills.	Complements Journey in Love and ensures broad, progressive personal-development learning.
Religious Education	Religious Education Directory (RED)	Knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith, Scripture and theology.	All year groups follow the RED. Links to dignity, love, family, vocation, forgiveness, justice and Catholic Social Teaching strengthen RSHE/PSHE.
Science	National Curriculum / EYFS	Bodies, growth, life cycles, health and relevant biological knowledge.	Statutory Science content is distinct from parental withdrawal arrangements for non-statutory sex education.
Computing / Online Safety	School Computing and online-safety curriculum	Safe, responsible and informed use of technology.	Reinforces online relationships, digital wellbeing, privacy, reporting and safeguarding.
Wider Personal Development	Building the Kingdom and wider school offer	Character, enrichment, pupil voice, social action, safety, cultural capital, leadership and preparation for later life.	Provides real-life experiences through which RSHE/PSHE knowledge and virtues are practised.

Appendix 2 – Principles for Sensitive Teaching

- Begin with clear ground rules and remind pupils that they may speak to a trusted adult privately.
- Use correct, age-appropriate vocabulary and avoid euphemisms that may create confusion or safeguarding risk.
- Do not invite pupils to disclose personal or family information in whole-class discussion.
- Use distancing techniques such as stories, scenarios and fictional characters for sensitive issues.
- Answer questions truthfully but only to the level appropriate for the pupils’ age and the agreed curriculum.
- Where a question is beyond the planned curriculum, acknowledge it respectfully and decide whether it should be answered privately, referred to parents, or addressed later.
- Follow safeguarding procedures immediately where a pupil’s comment or question raises a concern.
- Ensure pupils understand that the Catholic teaching of the school is presented clearly while every person is treated with dignity and respect.

Appendix 3 – Headteacher Statement

St Matthew's Catholic Primary School delivers Relationships, Sex and Health Education and PSHE through a planned, progressive curriculum rooted in the Catholic faith. Journey in Love is our core RSE programme. The wider PSHE curriculum is supported principally by PSHE Association resources, adapted to our pupils and Catholic context. All year groups follow the Religious Education Directory (RED), and purposeful links are made between RE, RSHE/PSHE, Science, Computing, safeguarding and the wider personal-development programme. Parents are consulted regularly and are given advance information about sensitive RSE content.