



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

‘This policy will be implemented in a way which honours the vision that every FCJ school is a community of persons - students, staff, governors - bound together in mutual respect and ready to rely on each other in fulfilling their privileged task as educators in a Catholic school.’

Purpose

This policy explains what relationships and sex education (RSE) pupils receive, when and by whom it is taught, how the school works transparently with parents and how provision is made inclusive, safe and faithful to the Catholic character of Upton Hall School FCJ

1. School mission and context

Upton Hall School FCJ strives to provide educational experiences that enable each pupil to achieve her full potential in every aspect of development, both in school and as an active member of the wider community. Inspired by the vision of Marie Madeleine d’Houët and the Society Faithful Companions of Jesus, we promote a Christian ethos which recognises the unique dignity of every person, encourages the pursuit of excellence and calls pupils to make a purposeful contribution to society.

Our approach to RSE is rooted in the Catholic understanding of the human person as made in the image and likeness of God. It is presented positively and prudently within a framework of dignity, loving relationships, responsibility, hope and the common good. The school’s distinctive faith perspective is identified clearly as such. Pupils also receive accurate scientific and legal information, encounter a balanced range of viewpoints where issues are contentious and are enabled to understand their rights and responsibilities.

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

2. Statutory basis and scope

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, require RSE for all pupils receiving secondary education and Health Education in all state-funded schools. In implementing this policy, the school has regard to the Department for Education’s Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance applying from 1 September 2026.

RSE is lifelong learning about relationships, emotional and physical development, sexuality, sexual health and the knowledge and skills needed to make safe, informed and responsible decisions. It is delivered principally through Flourish, using Ten:Ten Resources’ Life to the Full programme, with complementary teaching in Religious Education, Science, Computing and the wider life of the school.

3. Aims

- develop positive, respectful and nurturing relationships with oneself and others, online and offline
- recognise dignity, equality, rights and responsibilities and challenge prejudice, sexism, misogyny, homophobia and other harmful attitudes
- understand consent, boundaries, power and ethical behaviour, recognising that kindness and care go beyond consent

- recognise unsafe, exploitative or abusive behaviour, know that abuse is never the victim's fault and know how to seek help
- develop resilience, critical thinking and the confidence to resist pressure, including harmful online influence
- receive accurate, age-appropriate knowledge about bodies, reproduction, fertility, contraception, pregnancy, sexual health and relevant law
- make informed decisions in conscience, understanding Catholic teaching alongside accurate legal, scientific and health information.

Catholic values and virtues

All RSE is taught in accordance with the moral teaching of the Catholic Church and within the school's responsibility to provide the full statutory curriculum. The programme emphasises the importance of stable, loving relationships, marriage and family life, while affirming the dignity and fundamental right to respect of every pupil, whatever her family circumstances. It explicitly explores the virtues of faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

4. Curriculum principles

In accordance with the CES model framework, attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding and personal and social skills are developed through three inter-related dimensions: the whole-school ethos and wider life of the school, planned cross-curricular teaching and the specific RSE curriculum within Flourish.

Pupil voice: Provision is informed by meaningful engagement with pupils, assessment and pastoral intelligence so that it remains relevant and responsive.

Parental transparency: Parents are told in advance what will be taught and when. They can see a representative sample and view all curriculum materials on request.

Positivity: Teaching builds healthy norms, self-worth and practical relationship skills without normalising harmful behaviour.

Careful sequencing: Knowledge and skills are revisited with increasing depth before pupils are likely to encounter particular risks or decisions.

Skilled delivery: Trained staff use participative teaching, distancing techniques, agreed ground rules and anonymous questions where appropriate.

Whole-school consistency: RSE is reinforced through safeguarding, behaviour, equality, online safety, pastoral care and the Catholic life of the school.

5. Relationships education and sex education

For the purpose of parental clarity and withdrawal requests, the school distinguishes the two elements as follows:

- Relationships education includes families, friendships, committed relationships, equality, consent and boundaries, online behaviour, pornography, sexual harassment and violence, abuse, exploitation, safeguarding and help-seeking. Sensitive content may be relationships education where it can be taught without describing the detail of sexual activity.
- Sex education within RSE includes teaching which explains sexual activity and covers human sexual reproduction, intimate sexual relationships, contraception, fertility, pregnancy choices, safer sex and sexually transmitted infections. Relevant content taught as part of the Science curriculum is not treated as withdrawable sex education.

Advance information to parents will identify the lesson content and indicate which elements are sex education from which a withdrawal request may be made. Classification is based on the content actually taught, not simply the title of a lesson.

6. Curriculum content and timing

The substantially revised Flourish programme begins with Careers in Autumn 1. The whole school begins the Ten:Ten Life to the Full programme after the October half term. Statutory relationships, sex and health education is taught principally in Autumn 2 and Spring 1. The remaining Flourish terms focus principally on Citizenship, with relevant safeguarding, equality and online-safety learning reinforced across the curriculum.

Year	Autumn 2	Spring 1
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Year 7	Who Am I?; Changing Bodies; Healthy Inside and Out; Keeping Well Part 1; Where We Come From	Family and Friends; My Life on Screen; Living Responsibly; Basic First Aid Part 1; assessment
Year 8	Created and Chosen; Appreciating Differences; Feelings; Keeping Well Part 2; Before I Was Born	Tough Relationships; Think Before You Share; Wider World; Basic First Aid Part 2; assessment
Year 9	The Search for Love; Love People, Use Things; In Control of My Choices; Drug and Smoking Awareness; Fertility and Contraception	Commitment and Marriage; Understanding Consent; Safe and Smart Online; Human Rights (and Wrongs); Out and About; Lifesaving Skills
Year 10	Authentic Freedom; Self-Image; Beliefs, Values and Attitudes; Parenthood; Pregnancy and Abortion	Abuse; Online Influences; Solidarity; Out in Public; assessment
Year 11	Self-Worth; Alcohol, Drugs and Dependency; Mental Wellbeing; Eating Disorders; Health and Fitness	Family Planning and Fertility; Sexual Health; Pornography; Coercive Control; assessment

Religious Education, Science and Computing provide planned complementary content. These subject contributions are mapped against Appendix A so that statutory content is coherent and there are no gaps or unnecessary repetition. Detailed curriculum maps may be adjusted in response to emerging safeguarding needs, new technology or local issues. Parents will be informed of any material departure from the published programme.

Post-16 provision

Although the statutory requirement does not extend to pupils once they are over compulsory school age, the sixth form Flourish programme continues age-appropriate relationships, health and preparation-for-adulthood education. In 2026-27 this includes Common Room, consent, relationships and increased independence, supported by Cinema in Education and the wider Flourish programme. Parents and students receive curriculum information in the same transparent way.

7. Teaching, assessment and answering questions

RSE is taught mainly by trained school staff. Strategies include discussion, reflection, case studies, role play, film, question boxes, quizzes and other active learning. Ground rules and distancing techniques protect privacy: pupils are not invited to disclose personal sexual experiences. Learning is assessed through questioning, reflection, low-stakes checks and end-of-unit assessment. Assessment checks knowledge and application; it does not assess a pupil's personal beliefs or experiences.

Questions are answered honestly, factually and in an age-appropriate way. A teacher may defer a question if it is personal, outside the planned age-appropriate content, risks identifying individuals or raises a safeguarding concern. Where a pupil has been withdrawn from sex education, staff will not provide the withdrawn content in response to a classroom question, but will encourage discussion with parents and signpost appropriate trusted or professional sources. Safeguarding information needed to keep a pupil safe will always be provided.

The school promotes a healthy, positive atmosphere in which pupils can ask questions freely, receive appropriate answers and be protected from bullying or harassment because of a question, view or personal circumstance.

8. Catholic character, balance and impartiality

The school may teach its distinctive Catholic perspective and will make clear when content reflects religious belief. On matters where lawful and sincerely held views differ, teaching enables balanced and respectful discussion. Catholic teaching does not replace pupils' entitlement to accurate facts about law, biology, sexual and reproductive health, contraception, pregnancy options, sexual orientation or protected characteristics. Medically and legally accurate information is presented impartially, including where it differs from Church teaching.

9. Equality, sexual orientation, biological sex and gender reassignment

The school complies with the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty. Teaching must not discriminate against pupils or amount to harassment. Pupils learn about every protected characteristic by the end of secondary education: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Stable and healthy same-sex relationships are integrated into the programme rather than treated as a standalone topic. Sexual-health teaching is relevant to all pupils, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or questioning their sexual orientation. Pupils are taught the facts and law relating to biological sex and the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. Where there is significant debate beyond established facts and law, no contested view is presented as fact. Teaching does not reinforce gender stereotypes or suggest that social transition is a simple solution to distress or discomfort. All pupils are treated with dignity and bullying or disrespectful language is challenged.

10. Inclusion and SEND

RSE is planned to be accessible to pupils with SEND and to prepare them for adulthood in line with the SEND Code of Practice. Teachers consider prior knowledge, developmental readiness, communication, cognition, sensory needs and emotional regulation. Reasonable adjustments may include pre-teaching, visual supports, explicit vocabulary, simplified or chunked language, additional processing time, carefully selected examples, small-group or individual follow-up and liaison with parents and the SENDCo.

The school recognises that some pupils with SEND may be more vulnerable to bullying, harmful sexual behaviour, abuse, exploitation and violence. Adaptation therefore preserves rather than removes essential safeguarding knowledge, consent and help-seeking. Personalised teaching is agreed where needed through the graduated approach and the pupil's views are considered.

11. Sexual harassment, sexual violence and harmful online influence

RSE supports a whole-school culture of kindness, respect and safety. Pupils learn that anyone can experience sexual violence and the victim is never to blame. Teaching also recognises that most sexual violence is committed against women and girls and often has a gendered component, without implying that all boys or men are perpetrators or that all girls or women are inevitably victims.

Staff identify and challenge sexism, misogyny, homophobia and harmful stereotypes. Pupils explore the links between prejudice, unequal power and violence against women and girls, as well as the influence of pornography, incel ideologies, extremist online subcultures, AI-generated sexual content and misogynistic influencers. Teaching challenges harmful ideas without unnecessarily directing pupils to specific content or creators.

12. Safeguarding and confidentiality

Sensitive teaching may lead to disclosures. Staff follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy. No member of staff promises unconditional confidentiality. Pupils are told in advance that information may need to be shared to keep them or another child safe and, wherever appropriate, are supported to understand what will happen next.

Staff are trained to respond calmly and without blame and are aware of mandatory reporting duties, including FGM and any statutory duty in force concerning child sexual abuse. Where an external visitor is involved, the school agrees in advance how concerns will be passed immediately to the DSL. Examples and materials are checked for trauma sensitivity and teaching does not include methods or graphic detail relating to self-harm, suicide or abuse.

13. External visitors and resources

The planned programme is teacher-led and uses Ten:Ten Life to the Full resources. External specialists may enrich particular aspects but do not replace the school's responsibility for the curriculum. Before use, the school checks the visitor's expertise, materials, safeguarding arrangements, accessibility, impartiality and compatibility with this policy and the school's Catholic character, using the CES Checklist for External Speakers to Schools where appropriate. Health professionals and other visitors use the same agreed ground rules and distancing techniques as school staff. Parents will be told in advance about any external provider and the content to be delivered. The school will not enter into a contractual restriction that prevents parents from viewing materials used with pupils.

14. Partnership and transparency with parents

Parents are the first educators of their children and the school seeks an open, constructive partnership with them. An online parental consultation on the revised policy and provision was completed in June 2026. The principal theme in responses was a request for clear, specific information about what would be taught and when. This feedback has directly informed the arrangements below.

- From the launch of whole-school Life to the Full after October half term 2026, parents will receive advance information identifying the specific lesson topics and planned timing for their child's year group.
- The school will publish or otherwise provide the long-term curriculum overview and will notify parents of any material change or responsive addition.
- Parents will be shown a representative sample of resources and may request to view all materials used, including external-provider materials. Access will be arranged through a secure parent portal, presentation or appointment in a way that respects copyright but does not use copyright as a reason to refuse access.
- Where portal access or attendance at a presentation is not possible, the school will offer a reasonable alternative. Parents may be asked not to copy or redistribute copyrighted material.

- The school will support conversations at home through parent information, suggested discussion prompts or home materials and, where appropriate, curriculum briefings or workshops.
- Parents will be reminded in advance which content constitutes sex education and of the right to request withdrawal.

Parents cannot veto statutory curriculum content, but their views are considered when policy and curriculum are developed and reviewed. The policy is published on the school website and provided on request.

Following approval, the policy is disseminated to governors and to teaching and support staff. Staff responsible for delivery receive the curriculum documentation and training needed to implement it consistently. Parents can access the policy and curriculum overview through the curriculum booklets available on the school website.

Parents can access the Ten:Ten parent portal to view information about the Life to the Full programme using the username **opp-upton-49** and password **rse-parent-yellow**. These details are provided for use by Upton Hall School FCJ parents and carers and should not be shared more widely.

15. Parental right to request withdrawal from sex education

Parents may request that their child is withdrawn from some or all sex education delivered as part of RSE. They may not withdraw their child from relationships education, health education or National Curriculum Science, including Science content relating to puberty or sexual reproduction.

The school believes that the planned and controlled classroom environment, led by trained staff and supported by safeguarding procedures, is normally the safest place for this curriculum to be taught. This belief does not remove or diminish the statutory right to request withdrawal from sex education.

1. A request should be made in writing to the Headmistress and should identify, where possible, the content concerned.
2. The Headmistress or a delegated senior leader will discuss the request with the parent and, where appropriate, the pupil. The discussion will clarify the content, purpose and benefits of the teaching and consider possible social, emotional or safeguarding effects of withdrawal. The process and decision will be recorded.
3. A request will normally be granted. The Headmistress may refuse only in exceptional circumstances, for example because of a safeguarding concern or a pupil's specific vulnerability. Reasons will be explained and recorded.
4. A pupil who is withdrawn will receive appropriate, purposeful education and will not be isolated or disadvantaged.
5. From three terms before the pupil turns 16, the pupil may choose to receive sex education despite an earlier parental request. The school will ensure pupils know about this right and will make provision if the pupil opts in.

16. Roles and responsibilities

Governing Body: approves and keeps the policy under review; assures statutory coverage, accessibility, parental transparency, resource quality and alignment with the Catholic character of the school.

Headmistress: has overall responsibility for implementation, determines withdrawal requests and ensures the policy is published and available.

Deputy Headteacher responsible for ethos and personal development: oversees curriculum coherence, Catholic character, staff development and high-quality resources.

Assistant Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead: leads operational quality assurance of Flourish and RSE, coordinates safeguarding, inclusion, pupil voice, parental communication and evaluation with Heads of Year.

Subject leaders for RE, Science and Computing: map and assure complementary statutory content within their subjects.

SENDCo: advises on accessibility, reasonable adjustments and preparation for adulthood.

Teachers and support staff: contribute to the whole-school attitudes and values dimension, model respectful and healthy relationships, establish a safe learning environment and follow safeguarding procedures. Staff assigned to RSE also deliver and assess the planned curriculum.

External visitors: work within the agreed brief, this policy, safeguarding procedures and the school's Catholic character; responsibility remains with the school.

17. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The Assistant Headteacher, supported by the Deputy Headteacher responsible for ethos and personal development, Heads of Year and relevant subject leaders, monitors curriculum plans, lesson delivery, assessment, pupil work, accessibility, safeguarding themes and parental communication. Evaluation draws on pupil voice, staff feedback, parent feedback, assessment information and review of local and national safeguarding issues.

Findings are reported to governors and used to improve sequencing, resources, staff training and communication. The policy and curriculum are reviewed at least annually and sooner when legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding intelligence or the needs of pupils require change. Parents and pupils are meaningfully engaged when the policy is reviewed.

The Governing Body remains ultimately responsible for the policy. Annual review is led by the Headmistress, the senior leaders responsible for RSE and inclusion and the link governor, with contributions from staff, pupils and parents. The school will also seek advice from the Diocesan Schools' Service when appropriate.

18. Related policies and documents

- DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance (applicable from 1 September 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- SEND Information Report and Policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Assessment and Reporting Policy
- Collective Worship and Religious Education policies
- Visiting Speakers and External Agencies procedures

Appendix A - Statutory secondary RSE curriculum content

The school will continue to develop relevant knowledge taught in primary education and will ensure that pupils know the following by the end of secondary education. This appendix reflects the statutory guidance applicable from 1 September 2026. The wording below is organised for policy use; curriculum planning documents map each outcome to taught lessons.

Families

- There are different types of committed, stable relationships and these can contribute to wellbeing and the raising of children.
- Marriage and civil partnership are important relationship choices for many couples and have a legal status, rights, benefits and protections not available to cohabitants or those in a non-legally binding religious ceremony.
- "Common-law marriage" is a myth: cohabitants do not acquire marriage-like status or rights merely by living together or having children.
- Forced marriage and marriage before the age of 18 are illegal.
- Families and relationships can change through birth, death, separation and new relationships.
- Parents have responsibilities for raising children. Successful parenting and a child's early years are important to development.
- How to recognise when a family or other relationship is unsafe and how and where to seek help.

Respectful relationships

- The characteristics of positive relationships, online and offline, including consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, conflict management, reconciliation and ending relationships.
- How to consider one's impact on others and treat all people with kindness and respect, including strangers and people in public spaces. Everyone is unique and equal.
- The importance of self-esteem, independence and a positive relationship with oneself, and the right to be treated with respect.
- What tolerance requires, including respect for other people's beliefs, and practical skills for respectful communication and conflict.
- Different types of bullying, including online bullying, their impact, bystander responsibilities and how to get help.
- How to end relationships and friendships with kindness and manage the emotions that endings can bring.
- The role of consent in romantic and sexual relationships, recognising that ethical behaviour also requires kindness, care, attention to vulnerability and awareness of power.
- How stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability can cause harm, and how to recognise misogyny and other prejudice.
- How inequalities of power affect behaviour in relationships, including sexual relationships.
- How pornography can distort sexual attitudes, normalise harmful behaviour, undermine autonomy and create a sense of sexual entitlement.
- How online subcultures, including incel ideologies and some influencers, may shape sexual ethics and relationship norms.

Online safety and awareness

- Rights, responsibilities and expectations of behaviour apply online as they do offline.
- Online risks, personal information, privacy and location settings, and the distinction between public and private online spaces.
- How social media may contain fake, AI-generated, exaggerated or idealised content and why people may behave differently online.
- The risk that shared material can be redistributed and become impossible to control, and the law concerning image sharing.
- That keeping, forwarding, acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of a person under 18 is a crime, including self-generated and AI-generated imagery; sharing intimate images of an adult without consent is also a crime.
- How to report circulated personal information, images or videos and seek help without fear of blame.
- The prevalence and potential harms of deepfakes and ways to identify them.
- That online content may encourage misogyny, violence, weapon use or other harmful and illegal behaviour, and how recommendation systems can amplify such content.
- How online content, including pornography, can distort expectations of bodies, relationships and sexual behaviour and may portray misogynistic or harmful acts.
- How data is generated, collected, shared and used online, including targeted information and advertising.
- Online scams, grooming and sextortion: how they operate, how to identify risk and where to report concerns.
- The opportunities and risks of rapidly developing technology, including AI chatbots, and the need to evaluate new technologies critically.

Being safe

- How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including early romantic relationships, kissing and touching, and that kindness and care require more than consent.
- Strategies for identifying and managing pressure, including sexual pressure, and for resisting pressure without pressuring others.

- The law and concepts relating to sexual harassment and sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, unsolicited sexual language or attention, unwanted touching, image-based abuse, public sexual harassment, pressure to perform sexual acts and upskirting.
- The meaning of harmful sexual behaviour and how it can include harassment, violence and other concerning age-inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- The law and concepts relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour and emotional, sexual, economic, physical, violent or threatening abuse. Children who see, hear or experience its effects are victims in their own right.
- How to recognise stalking and harassment, including online, and how to report concerns.
- The law and concepts relating to sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, financial exploitation, abuse and grooming.
- The law relating to forced marriage, female genital mutilation, virginity testing and hymenoplasty, and where to seek support.
- That a victim is never to blame, anyone can experience abuse and help is available through trusted adults, school safeguarding routes, police and health services.
- How pornography may present harmful or unsafe activity as normal and why this does not make it acceptable.
- How to identify trustworthy people and sources, report abuse, seek medical attention and support others without taking unsafe responsibility.

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

- Sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive.
- The law on the age of consent, that a person can choose whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older and that intimacy and romance do not have to involve sex.
- How to give, withhold or withdraw sexual consent at any time and how law, faith, family values and personal values may inform decisions. Kindness and care require more than consent.
- How choices in sex and relationships can affect physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing, and that some sexual behaviours can be harmful.
- The full range of contraceptive choices, their efficacy and options, including male and female condoms, supported by medically accurate sources.
- Pregnancy choices, with medically and legally accurate and impartial information about keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and sources of further help.
- How STIs, including HIV, are transmitted; safer sex and condom use; PrEP and PEP; testing, treatment, prevalence and stigma.
- How alcohol and drugs may increase sexual risk-taking.
- How and where to seek confidential advice, treatment and support concerning sexual relationships, reproductive health and sexual violence or harm.
- How to identify and counter misinformation using medically accurate sources.

Appendix B - Law taught through RSHE

Applicable law is taught factually and at an appropriate point in the curriculum. This includes law relating to:

- marriage, civil partnership and forced marriage
- consent and the age of consent
- domestic abuse, stalking, rape and sexual offences
- FGM, virginity testing and hymenoplasty
- sexual abuse, sexual harassment, public sexual harassment, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour
- the Online Safety Act and online sexual abuse, including grooming and sextortion
- image and information sharing, including youth-produced sexual imagery, AI-generated sexual imagery and deepfakes
- pornography and abortion
- the Equality Act 2010 and protected characteristics
- alcohol, smoking, vaping, nicotine products, illicit drugs and gambling
- knives, weapons, criminal exploitation, gangs and county lines
- extremism, radicalisation, hate crime and the age of criminal responsibility
- medical consent, Gillick competence and parental responsibility.