



Our Mission Statement – the reason our College exists

“Learning & Growing in the Light of the Gospel”

With Christ at the centre of our learning, we:

- *Help young people to achieve their greatest potential*
- *Guide their intellectual growth, nurture their God-given talents, and inspire them to live in service to others*
- *Aim to develop honest, confident, responsible and compassionate members of society, based on the educational values of Blessed Antonio Rosmini*

Our Vision Statement – the long-term change resulting from our work

‘Encouraging Big Ideas’

Ratcliffe’s unique educational offering based on our College motto, “Legis Plenitudo Charitas”, Love is the fulfilment of the Law, provides a perfect context within which young people may acquire the emotional knowledge and interpersonal skills necessary to live happy and purposeful lives. The College’s inclusive Catholic ethos is complemented by the outstanding quality of our College community through which our Mission, “Learning and Growing in the Light of the Gospel”, serves to nurture resilience and develop maturity. Young people leave Ratcliffe with a strong sense of who they are and their purpose in the world, equipped socially, emotionally, morally and spiritually to go forth and make a difference to the communities in which they live and work.

RELATIONSHIP, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY

This policy has been written for the Whole School, Senior, Preparatory and Nursery

Author: James Rainer	Receiver: All staff
Review Date: August 2024	Next Review: September 2025

Signed

(Chair of Governors)

Signed

(Headmaster)

Rationale

Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) at Ratcliffe College is integrated into the College's approach towards accompanying our students through the development and nurturing of sound, supportive relationships of all kinds and to understand the context in which loving, intimate relationships are best formed.

Our students are growing up in an increasingly complicated environment, both online and offline. In *Learning to Love*, the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales state that "we all need to recognise that without providing an education in [RSHE] we leave many young people vulnerable to receiving their education second hand and often from such sources which damage them and their capacity to love." Therefore, we recognise that RSHE is vital for promoting safety and wellbeing in the many different domains in which they engage.

An age and developmentally appropriate RSHE programme is in place for all year groups at Ratcliffe College, and is firmly embedded within the Personal Social Health and Citizenship Education framework, known in the Senior School as *PSHCE* and in the Preparatory School as *Christian Living*.

Both PSHCE and Christian Living are unashamedly focussed on nurturing human wholeness in all of our students, through an exploration of physical, sexual, spiritual, emotional, social and intellectual matters. This is done sensitively and inclusively, allowing a safe space for debate and personal reflection.

The College's approach to PSHCE and Christian Living is supported and complemented by the wider College policies and the academic teaching of colleagues. This allows our students to leave the College safe, happy, and healthy young adults able to make a meaningful contribution to society and able to make informed choices that promote their personal wellbeing.

Whilst RSHE is a statutory requirement, at Ratcliffe College we have a clear focus on the value of the individual as a Roman Catholic Rosminian school. Our Mission Statement is that all should be able to *Learn and Grow in the Light of the Gospel*, and therefore we have a commitment to facilitating our students' understanding of each person as a beloved child of God. We do this by reflecting on our school motto – *Love is the Fulfilment of the Law*. In *Maxims of Christian Perfection*, our founder, Blessed Antonio Rosmini, states that "All...are called to perfection, no matter what their state or condition may be... The perfection of the Gospel consists in the

fulfilment of the two commandments of love, of God and of neighbour.” This provides a clear rationale for all our teaching within the framework of the Christian belief in the dignity of each human, created from and for love and relationship with God and with one another.

Whether Catholic, of other faiths, or of none, all those within the College community are held to be unique, precious and a gift to self and others. This policy is therefore founded on Christian values and the teachings of the Catholic Church. Pope Francis emphasises that “the acceptance of our body as a gift from God is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father... learning to accept your body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning.” Thus, positive person-centred education is at the heart of the College’s PSHCE and Christian Living programmes, focussing on the integrity of the whole human person, body and soul. The programme recognises that human sexuality is intimately bound to all human relationships and key values such as respect, integrity, virtue, joy, charity and equal dignity. This view is promoted throughout a programme which aims to raise self-esteem, increase awareness of the dignity of all human persons and promote behaviours and attitudes that are sensitive and caring to all. All of this is underpinned by Christ’s teaching “I have come that you might have life and have it to the full’ (John 10:10).

Whilst we act in according with statutory guidance in [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#) (DfE, September 2019, updated September 2021), the College is committed to delivering effective Relationships and Sex Education on the grounds that loving relationships are essential for human flourishing and that there is a need in our modern world for young people to have a genuine pastoral accompaniment as they navigate the challenges and excitements of their age. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis teaches that this pastoral accompaniment “must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in Christian life.” In the same document, Pope Francis reminds us that in accompanying a young person we must not “make judgements about their responsibility and culpability”.

This policy has particular regard to the following statutory guidance:

- [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#) (DfE, September 2019, updated September 2021)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

It also has regard for the following advice documents:

- The Equality Act 2010 and schools (DfE, May 2014)
- Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils (DfE, November 2013, supplementary information November 2014)

It also is guided by:

- The PSHE Association’s [Programme of Study](#)
- The [Catholic Education Service](#), particularly the ‘10 Principles’ of RSHE developed by Ten Ten Resources:
 1. Our bodies are Good!
 2. Through our loving relationships we become close to the image and likeness of God
 3. Catholic RSHE is about the whole person
 4. Catholic RSHE should be taught in partnership with parents
 5. Our deepest identity is as a child made in the image of God
 6. Story can change hearts and minds
 7. Catholic RSHE is an education in virtue

8. Catholic RSHE is an education in conscience
9. Relationship Education is about striving the Common Good
10. Prayer, Scripture and the Sacraments fuel the teaching of RSHE.

The DfE guidance states that “children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way” (DfE, 2019, p4). It is about the development of the student’s knowledge and understanding of themselves as a sexual being, about what it means to be fully human, called to live in right relationships with self and others and being enabled to make moral decisions in conscience.

In the Preparatory School, we reflect the guidance for primary education that the focus should be on “teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults.” (DfE, 2019, p19) This would include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

At the heart of the College’s RSHE lies the teaching of the Catholic Church on marriage and family life, the gift of committed love and stable relationships for the nurturing of children and the values of respect and care.

As well as ensuring that the academic departments and different year group and key stage teams complement the content of the RSHE curriculum, the programme works closely with the Safeguarding and Pastoral teams, the Chaplaincy, Boarding House teams and the Medical Department to ensure that each domain of the school is aware of curriculum content and appropriate safeguarding measures are in place. This whole school approach is in line with KCSIE 2023 (p34) which highlights the crucial role that schools play in preventative education: “Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school or college approach that prepares pupils and students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment.” Students are encouraged actively to engage in honest dialogue on all aspects of physical, mental and emotional well-being and to use the support strategies in place through the Student Support Services, ELSA and year group teams. The RSHE content promotes attitudes and virtues that encourage understanding of sexuality, fertility and sexual identity. The RSHE programme nurtures personal responsibility and seeks to develop personal and social skills that facilitate good judgement, respectfulness, ability to resist unwanted pressure, inclusivity, and empathy for others. Furthermore, students are supported in learning about and understanding the meaning of sexual love, the value and importance of marriage, the difficulties faced in relationship breakdown and bereavement. Students also learn about managing fertility, including knowledge of artificial contraception, avoiding unintended pregnancy, and keeping safe from sexually transmitted infections, and accessing sexual healthcare alongside other aspects of physical and mental health. The sacrality of life before and after birth is always emphasised.

The RSHE and PSHE (including Fundamental British Values) taught content within the PSHCE and Christian Living programmes at the College is underpinned by the College’s Catholic Rosminian charism, the half-termly Gospel values inspired by Catholic Social Teaching, and the teaching of the Catholic Church. PSHCE and Christian Living is scheduled regularly throughout the academic year as part of the academic calendar, and is taught in year groups, Preparatory

School classes, or Senior School tutor groups, where students develop and are can feel confidence to articulate beliefs and values on a range of issues connected to living in the modern world. It is a progressive programme, relevant to age and maturity, beginning in the EYFS and continuing through to the end of Key Stage 5.

The PSHCE and Christian Living programmes are of high quality and are evidence based so that students have sound knowledge to help them embrace “the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life” (DfE 2019, p8). Material is presented in order to foster the ability to tackle age appropriate moral and social questions with increasing complexity; managing risk, safeguarding and promotion of physical and mental health and well-being. It aims to support young people through their physical, emotional, and spiritual development, helping them make the transition from infancy and childhood through adolescence to adulthood with confidence. The PSHCE and Christian Living programmes are age-appropriate in guiding students towards responsible and informed decisions on leading healthy, respectful, and independent lives and refers at all times to the teaching of the Church on love, commitment, acceptance and inclusion. The importance of loving friendships and understanding of the qualities of lasting friendship, which include attributes such as consent, conflict resolution and discretion, are emphasised. The PSHCE and Christian Living curriculums also offers guidance on topics such as identifying toxic relationships, involving control, unequal power, coercion, abuse, harassment, and child-on-child abuse and what to do when these are identified.

It is recognised that in this digital age, there are increasing concerns about the risks of exposure to and engagement with social media. PSHCE and Christian Living, along with other areas of the curriculum, explores the dangers and benefits of online presence, including child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSE), child-on-child abuse, including sexting and upskirting, and sexual harassment and supports students in developing strategies for safety and integrity with this medium. If a student’s question or response raises a safeguarding concern then the teacher must follow guidelines, as set out within the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The PSHCE and Christian Living programmes offer a balanced curriculum. It actively promotes British Values (Democracy, the Rule of Law, Individual Liberty and Mutual Respect and Tolerance of those with different faiths). British Values are wholly aligned with Gospel-based values of acceptance and love of all humans, based on the understanding that all humans are made in the image of God, which underpin the curriculum and are explicitly linked to the half-termly Gospel Values that are inspired by Catholic Social Teaching. A wide range of beliefs and opinions are presented and discussed within the programmes. The protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010 are fully respected. Beliefs are taught sensitively in accordance with the College’s Catholic and Rosminian charism, but this is balanced with accurate presentation of civil legislation: for example, in the area of same sex marriage or exploration of inclusivity in LGBT communities.

Teaching Methods for RSHE

The College will ensure that:

- Students are taught in age-specific groups.
- All content is age-appropriate and the course is designed to be progressive and to spiral, so that what is taught in the younger years can be revisited in a more mature, complex way in later years. Content is sensitive to the different needs of students. Lessons are inclusive and teaching is adaptive, taking into account ability, maturity, faith beliefs and

sexual orientation. The PSHCE Coordinator and the Christian Living Subject Leader work closely with the SENCos to ensure that the curriculum is accessible. It does not subject students to discrimination.

- In general, PSHCE and Christian Living groups are gender balanced and the curriculum is delivered sensitively and mutual respect between genders is promoted. Gender balanced groups are the norm so that issues can be explored together and communicated in a sharing environment. Some parts of the RSHE curriculum may be taught in single-sex classes to encourage greater openness in students, but the same content is provided to both boys and girls.
- Provision is made for children with Special Educational Needs in accordance with their individual learning plans, and content and delivery adapted so that all students can access the PSHCE and Christian Living Curriculum. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024), extra pastoral support is available for students with SEN and disabilities when sensitive topics are covered. We understand that RSHE can be particularly important subjects for some pupils: for example, those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities. Such factors are taken into consideration in designing and teaching these subjects. Staff responsible for the pastoral care of SEND students are informed prior to potentially difficult or sensitive topics being covered. Teachers are supported with the curriculum map, printed resources, or online courses from providers such as Ten Ten and Wellio, lesson plans, links to further reading and through staff meetings, INSET and CPD opportunities.

Cross-curricular Links

RSHE content in PSHCE and Christian Living has cross-curricular links to many, if not all, other areas of the academic and pastoral life of the College. In the Preparatory School, themes explored in Christian Living taught in classes can be explored in other areas of the curriculum. In the Senior School there is a particularly strong link to the Pastoral Programme experienced through tutor time. There are also close links to subjects such as with Careers Education, History, Art, Drama, Physical Education, Biology, English, Geography, Politics, Business and Economics. Furthermore, the Senior Housemaster and Senior Housemistress and their teams deliver these values, pastorally, through lived, communal experience for our boarding community. Heads of Year reinforce key messages in year group assemblies.

Working with Parents

In accordance with teaching in *Gravissimum Educationis* (Pope Paul VI) the College recognises that parents have 'the primary and inalienable right and duty to educate their children'. The College encourages dialogue with parents about matters relating to RSHE and the curriculum rationale and content is kept up-to-date on the school's website. Parent Cafes and Information Evenings provide regular opportunities for parents to engage in such dialogue with pastoral leaders. Parents are also consulted in the annual review of this policy, in order to collaborate with families and ensure that our PSHCE and Christian Living programmes reflect our school community.

In accordance with *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education* (DfE, September 2019), parents have the right to request that their child be excused only from sex education, though not relationship education, within RSHE. The College will work with parents in communicating and explaining the purpose and content of RSHE. If a parent

would like their child to be excused from some or all of the sex education, this can be arranged in consultation with the Head. Such requests must first be addressed in writing to the Headmaster or the Headteacher of the Preparatory School. The College will support parents by providing material to help with their children's learning. A student in the three terms before they reach their 16th birthday may themselves request sex education. In this case, the College will provide this during one of those terms.

If a parent is unhappy about the content or delivery of the school's RSHE provision, then they are encouraged in the first instance to address this informally with the co-ordinators of PSHCE and Christian Living. Otherwise, they may write to the Deputy Head Pastoral in the Senior School or the Deputy Head of the Preparatory School, outlining the nature of their concern or complaint.

Other Roles and Responsibilities

- **Governors** ratify the RSE policy in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, teaching staff, parents, and students. They ensure that the policy is available to parents and that it is in accordance with other whole school policies and practices, such as in relation to students in SEND. They also ensure that the policy supports the Catholic Rosminian charism of the school. Governors have a responsibility to ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children, and link governors share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including the resources used. Finally, governors ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSHE within the PSHCE and Christian Living programmes.
- The **Headmaster** has overall delegated responsibility for implementing this policy, liaising with Governors, parents, diocesan school's services, appropriate agencies, and education authorities. In the Preparatory School, this responsibility is delegated to the Headteacher of the Preparatory School.
- The **Deputy Head Pastoral** reviews the RSHE policy to ensure that it aligns with other College policies and statutory guidance.
- The **Deputy Head Pastoral and the Deputy Head of the Preparatory School** facilitate consultation with parents and teachers, and help to ensure that the policy is available to parents. They also ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children from sex education.
- The **Lay Chaplain** reviews the RSHE policy and the PSHCE and Christian Living curriculums to ensure that it aligns with the guidance of the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales. They also contribute to the delivery of RSHE and support the PSHCE Coordinator and the Christian Living Subject Leader in the training of colleagues.
- The **PSHCE Coordinator and the Christian Living Subject Leader** have general responsibility for implementing this policy and for disseminating information on RSHE as well as providing appropriate INSET to staff, with support from colleagues such as the Senior Leadership Team or the Lay Chaplain. They will offer advice to any colleagues who require such support, will maintain and purchase resources, arrange visitors ensuring that appropriate venues and resources are provided, attend appropriate CPD and generally monitor the delivery of the programme. They will also collect feedback from parents, teachers and students to help evaluate and further develop the programmes.

- The **Deputy Head of the Preparatory School, Head of EYFS, the Assistant Head, Head of Sixth Form, and Heads of Year** will liaise with the PSHCE Coordinator and Christian Living Subject Leader with regard to the content of the programme, the arrangements for visiting speakers, the dissemination of resources and review the programme on occasion in their meetings with class teachers or tutors.
- **Class Teachers (Preparatory School) and Form Tutors** are the key people in the delivery of the programme. They will ensure that they have ready for delivery the resources that are shared by the PSHCE Coordinator or Christian Living Subject Leader, and they will ensure that the time allocated to the lesson is used constructively and efficiently in furthering the development of their students. They will be present and support good student order during any talks delivered to larger groups. This is so that they can follow-up the topic of a talk during subsequent sessions.
- **All staff** have a duty towards RSHE as it related to the College in every facet of its day-to-day life. All teachers are expected actively to contribute to implementation of the RSHE programme and enable students to flourish in physical, moral and spiritual well-being. Teachers will be expected to contribute to RSHE in accordance with the school's Catholic Rosminian charism by complimenting the RSHE taught programme. As such, regular guidance and INSET is provided. All staff are included in the development of the RSHE policy, such as through surveys, and are made aware of how the RSHE policy relates to them.

Review

The Deputy Head Pastoral will review this policy annually or more frequently if required by relevant guidance. They will be supported in this by the Headmaster, the Deputy Head of the Preparatory School, the PSCHE Coordinator, the Christian Living Subject Leader and the Lay Chaplain.

Links with Other Policies

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy
- Statement of Boarding Practice and Principles (Boarding Policy)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- PSHCE Policy Preparatory School
- PSHCE Policy Senior School
- Personal Relationships Policy
- Gender Identity Policy
- Special Education Needs Policy

