



The Ursuline Academy Ilford

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

2025

The Ursuline Academy Ilford

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Mission Statement



Act, move, believe, strive, hope, cry out to him with all your heart, for without doubt you will see marvelous things

The Ursuline Academy Ilford is a Catholic community of faith, love, kindness and service. Guided by Gospel values and the Holy Spirit, we strive to create an inclusive environment where everyone in our diverse community can reach their full potential in all their endeavours.

Our young women are inspired by the witness of St Angela and the vibrant school community, whose motto 'SERVIAM'- I will serve, empowers us all to play our full part in society.

To help bring this about, Governors, leaders, teaching and support staff commit themselves to:

- Recognising the value and God-given uniqueness of every student we teach and responding sensitively to their needs and talents.
- Ensuring equity in all we do, and that equality of opportunity is available to all.
- Providing opportunities to enable all students to develop and grow intellectually and spiritually.
- Building a community based on justice, trust, cooperation and courtesy.
- Inviting parents and carers to play an active role in their daughter's development, academically, socially, spiritually and morally.



"Act, move, believe, strive, hope, cry out to him with all your heart for without doubt you will see marvellous things."
St Angela, Prologue to the Councils, 16-18

Our values are drawn from the Ursuline charism, informed through our rich traditions, inspired by the spirit of St Angela Merici and challenged by the needs of our time.

Students in an Ursuline School are growing to be individuals who are:

- United in harmony
- Grateful and generous
- Listening and attentive
- Loving and compassionate
- Faith-filled and hopeful
- Courageous and resilient
- Discerning and joyful
- Leading for justice
- Acting with truth and integrity

DEFINING RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION

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”¹. It is about the development of the pupil’s knowledge and understanding of her or him 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 primary schools 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.”² This would include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe. In Secondary schools RSE should “give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship is like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure).”³

STATUTORY CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. (There is also a separate requirement for maintained secondary schools to teach about HIV, AIDS and sexually transmitted infections)

However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

RATIONALE

‘I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL’

(John.10.10)

We are involved in relationships and sex education precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. The belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in a Catholic school. Our approach to RSE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church’s teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals.

At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity; Father, Son and Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation. Because of the Christian belief that we are made in the image and likeness of God, gender and sexuality are seen as God’s gift, reflect God’s beauty, and share in the

¹Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for Governing Bodies, Proprietors, Headteachers, Principals, Senior Leadership Team, Teachers. Page 4

² Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for Governing Bodies, Proprietors, Headteachers, Principals, Senior Leadership Teams, Teachers. Page 19

³ Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for Governing Bodies, Proprietors, Headteachers, Principals, Senior Leadership Teams, Teachers. Page 25
RSE Policy

divine creativity. RSE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationships as it is there that sexuality grows and develops.

Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales and as advocated by the DFE (and the Welsh Assembly Government) RSE will be firmly embedded in the PSHE framework as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils. It is centred on Christ's vision of being human as good news and will be positive and prudent, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.

All RSE will be in accordance with the Church's moral teaching. It will emphasise the central importance of marriage and the family whilst acknowledging that all pupils have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from. It will also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

VALUES AND VIRTUES

Our programme enshrines Catholic values relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life. It also promotes those virtues which are essential in responding to the God's call to love others with a proper respect for their dignity and the dignity of the human body. The following virtues will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

AIM OF RSE AND THE MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, our school aims state that we will endeavour to raise pupils' self-esteem, help them to grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of all people and develop caring and sensitive attitudes. It is in this context that we commit ourselves:

In partnership with parents, to provide children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education"⁴ which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

RSE must be responsible, and appropriate. It should be taught within the context of Catholic principles of morality. As sexuality is understood by the Church as part of our 'giftedness', sexuality is essential to our personal identity. It is God's gift to us. All teachers of RSE must make themselves aware of the Roman Catholic Church's teaching regarding sexual matters.

RSE should be positive, showing the potential for development, whilst enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated. It should aim to correct misinformation and so prevent pupils from putting themselves at risk, which may affect their relationships with others.

⁴ *Gravissimum Educationis* 1

OBJECTIVES

To develop the following **attitudes and virtues**:

- reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility;
- respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others;
- joy in the goodness of the created world and their own bodily natures;
- responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others;
- recognising and valuing their own sexual identity and that of others;
- celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love;
- recognising the importance of marriage and family life;
- fidelity in relationships.

To develop the following **personal and social skills**:

- making sound judgements and good choices which have integrity, and which are respectful of the individual's commitments;
- loving and being loved, and the ability to form friendships and loving, stable relationships free from exploitation, abuse and bullying;
- managing emotions within relationships, and when relationships break down, with confidence, sensitivity and dignity;
- managing conflict positively, recognising the value of difference;
- cultivating humility, mercy and compassion, learning to forgive and be forgiven;
- developing self-esteem and confidence, demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others;
- building resilience and the ability to resist unwanted pressures, recognising the influence and impact of the media, internet and peer groups and so developing the ability to assess pressures and respond appropriately;
- being patient, delaying gratification and learning to recognise the appropriate stages in the development of relationships, and how to love chastely;
- assessing risks and managing behaviours to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity.

To **know and understand**:

- the Church's teaching on relationships and the nature and meaning of sexual love;
- the Church's teaching on marriage and the importance of marriage and family life;
- the centrality and importance of virtue in guiding human living and loving;
- the physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty;
- the facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation;
- how to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception;
- how to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

OUTCOMES

INCLUSION AND DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, faith or culture and is taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination. Lessons will also help children to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber-bullying), use of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help.

EQUALITIES OBLIGATIONS

The Governing Body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, pregnancy, maternity, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked-after children.

BROAD CONTENT OF RSE

Three aspects of RSE - attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills will be provided in three inter-related ways: the whole school / ethos dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific relationships and sex curriculum.

At the Ursuline Academy we use the resources from Ten-Ten; Life to the full. Across all year groups the main themes under which each topic lie are: Created and loved by God, Created to love others and Created to live in the community.

PROGRAMME / RESOURCES

See appendix 1 for the overview of the Ten-Ten resources; life to the full

PARENTS AND CARERS

We recognise that parents (and other carers who stand in their place) are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assist parents and carers in educating their children. Therefore, the school will support parents and carers by providing material to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help parents/carers to find out more. Parents/carers will be informed by the newsletter when the more sensitive aspects of RSE are covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning.

Parents continue to have ***the right to withdraw*** their children from Sex Education except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. It is however hoped that parents sending their children to a Catholic school would see the importance of educating children in these matters within the context of the Catholic faith. Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the

school by contacting the Headteacher. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning.

We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.

Please refer to the DfE guidance Page 17 for further details on the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw).

BALANCED CURRICULUM

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues.

Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE (in secondary schools/academies relating to forced-marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion, the age of consent and legislation relating to equality). Knowing about facts and enabling young people to explore differing viewpoints is not the same as promoting behaviour and is not incompatible with our school's promotion of Catholic teaching. We will ensure that pupils have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHING THE PROGRAMME

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lays with forms tutors and teachers of science, religious education, physical education, RSE and PSHE.

However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE programme. They will be role models for pupils of good, healthy, wholesome relationships as between staff, other adults and pupils. They will also be contributing to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.

External Visitors

Our school will often call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSE. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher-led sessions. It is important that any external visitor is clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in school delivering a session. Any visitor must adhere to our code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Checklist for External Speakers to Schools.'⁵

Health professionals should follow the school's policies, minimising the potential for disclosures or inappropriate comments using negotiated ground rules and distancing techniques as other teachers would. They will ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice.

⁵ CES Checklist for External Speakers to Schools, 2016

OTHER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING RSE

Governors

- draw up the RSE policy, in consultation with parents and teachers;
- ensure that the policy is available to parents;
- ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g., SEN, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs;
- ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children;
- establish a Link Governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used;
- ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHE.

Headteacher

The Headteacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, the Diocesan Schools' Service and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

All Staff

RSE is a whole school issue. All teachers have a responsibility of care; as well as fostering academic progress they should actively contribute to the guardianship and guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of their pupils. Teachers will be expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSE. All staff have been included in the development of this policy and all staff should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

This RSE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHE framework. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents (for example, Bullying Policy, Safeguarding Policy etc)

Pupils with particular difficulties whether of a physical or intellectual nature will receive appropriately differentiated support in order to enable them to achieve mature knowledge, understanding and skills. Teaching methods will be adapted to meet the varying needs of this group of pupils.

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

The Governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. They want to ensure that pupils can ask questions freely, be confident that their questions will be answered, and be sure that they will be free from bullying or harassment from other children and young people.

Controversial or Sensitive Issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE. These may be matters of maturity, of personal involvement or experience of children, of disagreement with the official teaching of the Church, of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious or harmful activity. The Governors believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the

RSE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion.

See also Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, Managing difficult questions, page 23 for more detail.

Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, e.g., where a child or young person's questions hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE AT RISK

Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place. Effective RSE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue. Teachers will need to be aware of the needs of their pupils and not let any fears and worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects that a child or young person is a victim of or is at risk of abuse they are required to follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ADVICE

All Governors, all teachers, all support staff, all parents and all pupils must be made aware of this policy, particularly as it relates to issues of advice and confidentiality.

All lessons, especially those in the RSE programme, will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and sex, developing appropriate personal and social skills and becoming appreciative of the values and attitudes which underpin the Christian understanding of what it means to be fully human.

Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in the programme. Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties, in line with the school's pastoral care policy. Teachers should explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance. Teachers will explain that in such circumstances they would have to inform others, e.g., parents, Headteacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Heads of Year alongside the Head of RE will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils' work at regular intervals. The programme will be evaluated biannually by means of questionnaires / response sheets / needs assessment given to pupils, and / or by discussion with pupils, staff and parents. The results of the evaluation should be reported to these groups of interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

Families

Pupils should know:

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- what marriage is, including its legal status – for example, that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married in an unregistered religious ceremony.
- why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.
- the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
- how to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognize this in others' relationship)

Respectful Relationships, including Friendships

Pupils should know:

- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships, in all contexts including online, such as: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict;
- reconciliation and ending relationships, this includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship;
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships;
- how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (for example, how they might encourage prejudice);
- that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs;
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help;
- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control;
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable;
- the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.

Online and Media

Pupils should know:

- their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online;
- about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online;
- not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them;
what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online the impact of viewing harmful content;
- that specifically sexually explicit material, for example pornography, presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners;
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail;
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.

Being Safe

Pupils should know:

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships;
- how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn, in all contexts, including online.

Intimate and Sexual Relationships, including Sexual Health

Pupils should know:

- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship;
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing;
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause;
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others;
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex;
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available;
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage;
- that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help);
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDs, are transmitted, how

risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing;

- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment;
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour;
- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

Teaching strategies will include:

- Establishing ground rules;
- Discussion;
- Reflection;
- Film & video;
- Group work;
- Role-play;
- Ten Ten resources;
- Guest speakers;
- Visiting health professionals.

ASSESSMENT

Assessing learning in RSHE will be carried out using a combination of teacher assessment and pupil self and peer assessment.

Appendix 1: Ten – Ten: Life to the full – Overview year 7-13

Overview

Life to the Full Secondary

Ten:Ten
Resources

Class	RE, PSHE or Tutor Time							Whole Year		
Main themes	All	Created and Loved by God			Created to Love Others		Created to Live in Community	All		
Sub themes	Religious Understanding	Me, My Body, My Health	Emotional Well-Being	Life Cycles	Personal Relationships	Keeping Safe	Living In The Wider World	Cinema In Education		
Sessions per programme	Session 1 50 minutes or 2 x 25-minutes or 2 x 50-minutes	Session 2 50 minutes or 2 x 25-minutes or 2 x 50-minutes	Session 3 50 minutes or 2 x 25-minutes or 2 x 50-minutes	Session 4 50 minutes or 2 x 25-minutes or 2 x 50-minutes	Session 5 50 minutes or 2 x 25-minutes or 2 x 50-minutes	Session 6 50 minutes or 2 x 25-minutes or 2 x 50-minutes	Session 7 50 minutes or 2 x 25-minutes or 2 x 50-minutes	Session 1 Whole or half-year groups	Session 2 Whole or half-year groups	Session 3 Whole or half-year groups
Year 7	Who Am I?	Changing Bodies	Healthy Inside and Out	Where We Come From	Family and Friends	My Life on Screen	Living Responsibly	Facts of Life	Seeking and Offering Support	Looking in the Mirror
Year 8	Created and Chosen	Appreciating Differences	Feelings	Before I Was Born	Tough Relationships	Think Before You Share	Wider World	The Trouble with Max	Trust the Truth – Part One	Trust the Truth – Part Two
Year 9	The Search for Love	Love People, Use Things	In Control of My Choices	Fertility and Contraception	Commitment and Marriage	Understanding Consent	Human Rights - And Wrongs	Love, Honour, Cherish	The Gift of Sex	The Gift of Self
Year 10	Authentic Freedom	Self-Image	Beliefs, Values, Attitudes	Parenthood	Pregnancy and Abortion	Abuse	Solidarity	Babies	Responding to an Unexpected Pregnancy	Safe Sex or Save Sex?

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Year 11	Self-Worth	Addiction	Eating Disorders	Birth Control	Pornography	STIs	Coercive Control	Truth and Lies	Truth or Lies – Part One	Truth or Lies – Part Two
Year 12								Common Room	Life in Sixth Form – Part One	Life in Sixth Form – Part Two
Year 13								Bakhita's Prayer	Understanding Human Trafficking	Taking Action