

## Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

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A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.  
*John 13:34*

Ampleforth College

<b>Persons responsible for Policy</b>	<b>Head of Christian Living</b> <b>Deputy Head Pastoral and Wellbeing</b> <b>The Head</b> <b>RSHE Trustee</b>
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## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) at Ampleforth College (the ‘College’) is integrated into the College’s approach towards developing and nurturing sound relationships of all kinds and to understand the context in which loving, intimate relationships are best formed. College students grow up in an increasingly complex environment both on and offline, and 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 and is firmly embedded within the Personal Social Health Education framework which is called Christian Living (CL) at the College. CL is focussed on nurturing human wholeness, sensitively and inclusively, in all our students – physical, sexual, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual. A whole school approach to CL ensures that the curriculum is complemented and supported by the College’s wider policies and academic teaching, so that students leave the College safe, happy and healthy young adults able to make a meaningful contribution to society. The College meets the RSHE statutory requirement through facilitating our students’ understanding that each person is a beloved child of God, giving a clear rationale for all our teaching within the framework of the Christian belief in the dignity of each human, created for love and relationship.
- 1.2 At the College, Catholic education and Benedictine values underpin all that is done both within and outside the curriculum: “I have come that you may have life and have it to the full,” (John 10:10). Whether Catholic, or of other faiths, or none, all those within the school 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, which puts positive person-centred education at its heart and focusses on the integrity of the whole human person, body and soul. In this context, sexuality is intimately bound to all human relationships and key values such as respect, integrity, virtue, joy, charity and equal dignity are embraced and promoted: “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus,” (Galatians 3:28). With this in mind, the RSHE programme 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.
- 1.3 In accordance with statutory guidance, *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education* (DfE, September 2019, updated September 2021), the College is committed to delivering effective Sex and Relationship Education on the grounds that loving relationships are essential for human flourishing. The mystery of the Holy Trinity teaches all Christians that humans are relational beings created for love, and students are taught to build healthy, loving relationships where high self-esteem, acceptance of other beliefs and a sense of belonging are fostered.

This policy has regard to statutory guidance *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education* (2019, updated September 2021); *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (September 2024); DfE advice documents: *The Equality Act 2010 and schools* (May, 2014), *Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils* (November, 2013, and supplementary information, November, 2014), and DfE policy statement: *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education* (March, 2017) and PSHE Education Programme of Study (PSHE Association, 2020).

The policy should also be read in conjunction with the following College policies: Safeguarding policy, Anti-bullying policy, Behaviour policy, Online Safety policy, SEND policy and the Christian Living incorporating PSHE (including British Values) policy.

Defining Relationships 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” (DfE, 2019, p4). It is about the development of the pupil’s knowledge and understanding of their identity as sexual beings and 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 with good conscience. The main focus of secondary education in RSHE is “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 who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe. These topics are taken forward at the College, following the DfE guidance, in an age-appropriate way to “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 looks 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, consent and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure),” (DfE, 2019, p25) 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 complement the content of the RSHE curriculum, the programme works closely with the Safeguarding and Pastoral teams, House Teams (including Matrons) and the Infirmary 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 pastoral, House and Infirmary contexts. 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.

- 1.4 The RSHE and PSHE (including British Values) taught content within the CL programme at the College is underpinned by the College’s Benedictine Ethos, Gospel values and the teaching of the Catholic Church (see *Christian Living incorporating PSHE (including British*

*Values*)). CL is a timetabled programme where students develop and are encouraged 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 Key Stage 3 and continuing through to the end of Key Stage 5. All students attend CL (see paragraph 4 for the exception of the right to withdraw).

- 1.5 The CL programme is of high quality and is 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 childhood through adolescence to adulthood with confidence. The CL programme guides 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 CL curriculum also offers guidance on identifying toxic relationships, involving control, unequal power, coercion, abuse, harassment and child-on-child abuse and what to do when these are identified.
- 1.6 It is recognised that in this digital age, there are increasing concerns about the risks of exposure to and engagement with social media. CL, 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 Policy.
- 1.7 The CL programme is 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. A wide range of beliefs and opinions are presented and discussed within the CL programme. The protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010 are fully respected. Beliefs are taught sensitively in accordance with the College’s Catholic and Benedictine ethos, 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.

## **2 Teaching methods as for PHSE policy:**

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 so that what is taught in the early 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 Head of CL works closely with the SENCo to ensure that the curriculum is accessible. It does not subject students to discrimination.

- In general, CL 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 are 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 CL Curriculum. In line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (September 2023), 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, resources in the form of booklets containing materials, or online courses, lesson plans, links to further reading and through team meetings. The curriculum is guided by PSHE Education Programme of Study (PSHE Association 2020). All RSHE teachers have received specific training for RSHE delivery (RSHE training by TenTen from the Catholic Education Service, NSPCC certified online training).
- The curriculum snake is outlined in Appendix I. Parents can find details of how to access the TenTen parent summary on our parent portal, although parents should note that from September 2024 this is used as occasional accompaniment in our teaching not as a frequently used resource. This access to TenTen is in line with the letters from the Secretary of State for Education (October 2023) on the sharing of resources which can be accessed [here](#).

### 3 Teaching programme

CL content has cross-curricular links to many, if not all, other areas of the academic, pastoral and house life. It has close links with Careers Education, History, Art, Physical Education, Biology, Geography and Modern Studies. Furthermore, Housemistresses and Housemasters deliver these values, pastorally, through lived, communal experience. Through audit, the College ensures that Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural and British Values strands are embedded in all areas of the curriculum.

### 4 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 and has an up-to-date leaflet describing the curriculum rationale and content. There is also provision for such dialogue in the Parents’ Retreats, given five times per year and open to all parents. Parents know who to contact for further information and in case of any concerns. Parents are consulted in the annual review of this policy, in order to collaborate with families and ensure that our Christian Living programme is reflective of 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. 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 16<sup>th</sup> birthday may themselves request sex education. In this case, the College will provide this in one of those terms.

A letter outlining the RSHE programme for the relevant year group is sent to all parents at the start of the academic year. The letter includes a reminder of the right to request withdrawal from sex education as per above. A template for this can be found in Appendix II.

## 5 Working within the wider community

CL has links to the many and varied Service Projects in the school. Year 10 and Year 12 students in particular participate in service activities which engage with the wider community such as local schools, elderly care homes and charity shops. CL also links closely to Chaplaincy, which takes students out into the wider world, for example the Year 12 Retreat, Friendship Holiday, FACEFAW and the Lourdes Pilgrimage.

## 6 Visiting Speakers

The CL curriculum regularly works with external organisations to enhance the delivery of the programme, for example, with subject specialist knowledge, or varying ways of engaging students. The College ensures that visitors enrich the programme rather than acting as a replacement for teacher-led delivery. As with all outside speakers, safeguarding and supervision arrangements follow the College's Visiting Speaker Policy; this requires, a risk assessment to be undertaken which includes the use of the Checklist for External Speakers to Schools.

The views of speakers may not necessarily be fully aligned to the College's Catholic Benedictine ethos but speakers are asked to deliver content in a manner that is respectful of it and the Magisterium of the Church is reinforced by the CL teachers. In order to minimise inappropriate comments or disclosures, negotiated ground rules and distancing techniques are employed as would be the case with classroom teachers. Furthermore, follow-up discussions ensure that students' questions can be addressed and that the teaching of the Catholic Church can be articulated.

## 7 Other Roles and Responsibilities

**The Head** has overall delegated responsibility for implementing this policy, liaising with trustees, parents, diocesan schools' service, appropriate agencies and education authorities.

**The RSHE Trustee** shares in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used; ensures that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSHE within the CL programme.

**The Deputy Head Pastoral and Wellbeing** reviews the RSHE policy, ensuring consultation with parents and teachers; ensures that the policy is available to parents; ensures that the policy

aligns with other College policies, ensures that parents know of their right to withdraw their children from sex education.

**The Head of Christian Living** is the PHSE/RSHE co-ordinator and has general responsibility for implementing this policy and for disseminating information on RSHE as well as providing appropriate INSED to staff (with support from the Senior Leadership Team).

**All staff:** RSHE relates 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 and Benedictine ethos by complimenting the RSHE taught programme. As per paragraph 2, all RSHE teachers receive appropriate training. All staff are included in the development of the RSHE policy and are made aware of how the RSHE policy relates to them.

## **8 Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently if required by relevant guidance.



## Appendix II: template annual letter to parents

Dear *[name of parent or carer]*,

We believe that promoting the health and wellbeing of our pupils is an important part of their overall education. We do this through our personal, social, health and emotional (PSHE) curriculum delivered in lessons called Christian Living. PSHE covers many topics including all kinds of relationships, physical/emotional health and the skills needed to live in the wider world. The aim of our PSHE curriculum is to help pupils make safe and informed decisions during their school years and beyond. The Christian Living Policy can be found [here](#).

Relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) is the statutory element of our PSHE curriculum and all schools in England are required to teach. We will be teaching lessons about RSHE/RHE as part of our Christian Living programme and in additional off-timetable workshops. This will include topics such as families; online safety; puberty; relationships and communication skills; pregnancy and birth; contraception; sexually transmitted diseases; prevention of sexual abuse; body image; sexting and social media; pornography; consent. This has been carefully adapted so that it follows the guidelines of the Catholic Education Service at the same time as meeting our statutory obligations. During these lessons, pupils will be able to ask questions, which will be answered factually in an age-appropriate manner. Each pupil's privacy will be respected, and no one will be asked to reveal personal information.

You have the right to withdraw your child from **sex education** delivered as part of RSHE in secondary schools which, unless there are exceptional circumstances, will be granted up to three terms before your child turns 16. At this point, if the child themselves wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will arrange for this to happen in one, two or three terms before the child turns 16 – the legal age of sexual consent.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education at secondary level and we believe the content of these subjects are important for all children to be taught. More detail on the content of the curriculum is available [here](#).

If you have any queries about the content of the programme or resources used, please do not hesitate in contacting me at school. All materials used are available for you to browse through should you so wish.

Yours sincerely,