St Joseph
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

RSHE Policy

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Amy Richards and Michelle Forrest	Ann Connor Trust Board	29.1.26	1	July 2028

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Abstract

This policy sets out the Trust-wide approach to delivering statutory, safeguarding-led RSHE across all SJCMAT academies, grounded in Catholic teaching and the dignity of the human person. It ensures a consistent, age-appropriate and inclusive curriculum from early years to secondary, aligned with DfE requirements from September 2026. Strong partnership with parents, clear guidance on withdrawal, and robust Trust-level monitoring underpin consistent, high-quality delivery.

Version History			
Date	Version	Status	Summary of Changes
21.1.26	1		Policy Creation and approval
12.7.26	2		Minor reformatting of sub-heading numbering- no content changed

For the purpose of this policy the following representatives need to sign off this document:	
Role & Responsibilities	**Name**
Director of Catholic Education	Michelle Forrest
Director of Primary Education	Amy Fidler
Director of Secondary Education	Michael Gun Why

Website:	
Yes/No	Yes

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1. Mission, Values and Catholic Ethos

St Joseph Catholic Multi Academy Trust places Christ at the centre of all relationships, decisions and actions. We believe every child is created in the image and likeness of God and therefore deserves to be loved, valued and respected. RSHE supports this mission by helping pupils understand their dignity, develop healthy relationships and make informed, responsible choices as they grow.

The RSHE curriculum in our Trust combines statutory requirements with the richness of Catholic teaching. It supports pupils to understand their physical, emotional and spiritual development, and to build relationships founded on respect, honesty and compassion. RSHE forms part of the holistic education we provide, helping children to grow in character, develop resilience and learn how to safeguard themselves and others.

Catholic Life is interwoven throughout RSHE through resources such as Ten Ten, Journey in Love and chaplaincy support. These complement the statutory curriculum by reinforcing Gospel values,

the importance of family and community, and the belief that all people deserve kindness, dignity and care.

SJCMAT is committed to inclusion and pastoral sensitivity. RSHE is delivered in a safe and supportive environment where pupils feel able to ask questions, seek guidance and learn without judgement. Our aim is to ensure every pupil knows their worth and leaves our schools prepared to thrive in relationships, in faith and in society.

2. Purpose of the RSHE Policy

This policy sets out the Trust-wide expectations for delivering high quality, statutory, compliant Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) across all academies within St Joseph Catholic Multi Academy Trust. Its purpose is to ensure that every school provides a curriculum that is consistent, age appropriate, inclusive and grounded in Catholic teaching and aligned to the CES while meeting all legal requirements that come into force from September 2026.

The policy clarifies how RSHE supports the Trust's wider commitment to safeguarding, Catholic Life, Personal Development and the holistic formation of every pupil. It ensures that all academies use approved resources, follow clear curriculum pathways and implement effective leadership structures so that teaching is accurate, sensitive and protective. By providing this central framework, the Trust guarantees that all pupils receive the same high standard of RSHE, regardless of which SJCMAT school they attend.

This policy also sets out expectations for parental partnership, staff training, curriculum publication and monitoring. Each academy must create its own school-level overview and delivery statement that aligns with this Trust policy, reflecting the local context while maintaining the shared principles and requirements described here.

The policy will be published on each academy's website and made available to parents on request.

3. RSHE Principle, Statutory Policy and Framework

Safeguarding is central to RSHE across St Joseph Catholic Multi Academy Trust. RSHE contributes directly to schools' safeguarding duties and supports pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to stay safe.

This policy complies with the Department for Education statutory guidance Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (most recently updated for implementation from September 2026).

RSHE across the Trust:

- supports statutory safeguarding duties under Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2025 and the SJCMAT Safeguarding Policy

- equips pupils with protective behaviours and the vocabulary to recognise concerns and articulate worries
- helps pupils understand their rights, set personal boundaries and seek help when they feel worried or at risk

RSHE content reinforces key safeguarding themes, including:

- consent and personal boundaries
- recognising coercion, peer pressure and unhealthy relationship dynamics
- understanding healthy and unhealthy relationships
- staying safe online, including risks linked to grooming, exploitation, harassment and abuse
- recognising and responding to risky or harmful situations

Delivery of safeguarding content:

- is age appropriate, sensitive and progressive, building as pupils mature
- supports pupils to understand the emotions associated with risk or harm
- clearly signposts trusted sources of support within and beyond the school
- Staff responsibilities:
- all staff delivering RSHE must be trained in safeguarding procedures
- staff must be alert to the possibility of disclosures during or after RSHE lessons
- responses to pupils must be calm, compassionate and professional
- staff must never promise confidentiality
- concerns must be reported immediately in line with Trust safeguarding procedures
- teaching must not encourage personal disclosures, normalise harmful behaviour or include content that is inappropriate or factually inaccurate

Leadership and review:

- RSHE content is reviewed regularly to reflect emerging safeguarding risks at national, local and school level
- leaders must evaluate the effectiveness of RSHE in reducing vulnerabilities and improving pupils' confidence in seeking help
- RSHE plays a key role in early identification of harm and ongoing safeguarding culture

Mandatory reporting:

- staff must be aware of mandatory reporting duties, including those relating to FGM
- any disclosure arising from RSHE that indicates risk of harm must result in immediate safeguarding action

4. Curriculum Delivery and Structure

RSHE across SJCMAT is delivered through a planned, age-appropriate and coherent curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge and confidence over time. Schools are expected to provide teaching through RSHE lessons, tutor time, RE, Catholic Life, assemblies and wider Personal Development activities, ensuring pupils receive consistent messages about relationships, wellbeing and safeguarding.

Each school must map learning across the year so pupils understand relationships, respect, consent, emotions, online behaviour, puberty, sexual health and personal safety in a clear and

developmentally appropriate way. RSHE must be delivered by trained staff in a safe and supportive environment where pupils feel confident to ask questions and seek help if needed.

The curriculum should also respond to safeguarding trends and the pastoral needs of pupils, ensuring it remains relevant and protective. While delivery structures may vary between academies, all schools must fully align to this Trust policy and the statutory requirements that underpin it.

5. Curriculum Content Requirements

The RSHE curriculum across SJCMAT is structured to ensure pupils receive accurate, developmentally appropriate and safeguarding-led teaching from early years through to the end of secondary education. Content is carefully sequenced so that pupils build secure knowledge over time, develop healthy and respectful relationships, and gain the confidence to keep themselves safe.

Catholic teaching underpins the curriculum, ensuring pupils understand the dignity of the human person and the importance of love, family and responsibility.

Across the Trust, RSHE includes statutory teaching in:

- Relationships Education in primary schools
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in secondary schools
- Health Education across all phases

Curriculum content covers, as appropriate to age and phase:

- families, friendships, respect and personal boundaries
- emotional wellbeing, mental health and physical health
- puberty, menstrual wellbeing and sexual health
- consent, healthy and unhealthy relationships and safeguarding
- online safety, exploitation, harassment and abuse
- substance misuse, digital resilience and first aid

In line with updated DfE guidance from September 2026, secondary RSHE includes statutory teaching on:

- marriage, civil partnership and the law
- violence, abuse and illegal practices
- online risks, including deepfakes, sextortion and digital manipulation

Catholic teaching is integrated across all phases, promoting:

- human dignity and respect for self and others
- the importance of family, love and commitment
- understanding the body as a gift from God
- moral decision-making grounded in Gospel values

Detailed curriculum content, sequencing and statutory mapping are set out in school-level RSHE curriculum documentation, which is reviewed regularly and available for parents to access on individual Academy websites.

6. Teaching Gender, Sex and Identity

Teaching about sex, gender and identity across the Trust is grounded in factual accuracy, legal clarity and pastoral sensitivity, in accordance with the DfE RSHE Statutory Guidance (2026) and the Equality Act 2010. Pupils are taught scientifically accurate, age-appropriate information that promotes safeguarding and reflects the Catholic belief in the dignity and worth of every human person.

In line with DfE statutory expectations, secondary schools must integrate learning about healthy same-sex relationships across the RSHE curriculum. This ensures pupils understand that respectful, stable and safe relationships share the same core qualities regardless of sexual orientation.

7. Inclusion and SEND

Pupils with SEND can be at increased risk of exploitation or misunderstanding social cues. RSHE must therefore teach protective behaviours explicitly, including:

- recognising unsafe situations
- understanding consent and personal boundaries
- identifying trusted adults
- knowing how to seek help

Throughout all teaching, pupils' dignity, safety and self-worth should be central. Lessons must reflect Catholic values of compassion and respect, ensuring every child feels included, supported and able to participate confidently.

8. Parental Engagement and Right to Withdraw

SJCMAT values parents and carers as the primary educators of their children and works in full partnership with families from all faiths and backgrounds. Schools must ensure that parents understand what their children will be taught in RSHE, feel confident that content is age appropriate and delivered sensitively, and have clear routes to view materials and ask questions.

Strong communication helps families to trust that RSHE supports safeguarding, wellbeing and the dignity of every child.

The legal position on withdrawal is strictly defined. Parents cannot withdraw their child from Relationships Education in primary or secondary school, nor from Health Education at any phase. Parents may request withdrawal from Sex Education in secondary school only. However, parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from any content taught as part of the statutory Science curriculum, including biological aspects of human reproduction. When a request is made, the Headteacher must meet with the parent to discuss the request and explain the statutory expectations.

Parents cannot withdraw their child from:

- Relationships Education (primary and secondary)
- Health Education (primary and secondary)
- Any biological content taught within the Science curriculum

Parents can request withdrawal from:

- Sex Education where it is taught as part of the RSHE curriculum and outside of the Science curriculum

Additional statutory requirements regarding withdrawal:

Pupils have the right to opt back in to Sex Education from three terms before they turn 16, even if their parents previously withdrew them.

Headteachers may refuse a withdrawal request in exceptional circumstances, for example where withdrawing a pupil would place them at risk or prevent them accessing essential safeguarding information. Any refusal must be clearly recorded, justified and communicated to parents.

9. Staff Training and Professional Development

SJCMAT expects all staff who deliver RSHE to be well trained and confident in teaching sensitive content. Schools must ensure that staff understand statutory requirements, safeguarding procedures and the Catholic principles that underpin the curriculum. Training should equip staff to respond appropriately to questions, manage disclosures safely and create a supportive and respectful learning environment.

Professional development should be ongoing and may include Trust-wide CPD or external training. New staff or those new to RSHE must receive induction before teaching the curriculum to ensure consistent, high quality delivery across the Trust in line with our mission.

10. Monitoring- Across the Trust Estate

This policy will be reviewed by DCE/HoSABC annually.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trust Board.

11. Links with other policies

This RSHE policy links to the following policies and documents:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

12. Sign off

Presented & Approved by Trust Board	29.1.26
Signed by Chair of Trust Board	A.Connor
Name of Chair of Trust Board	Ann Connor OBE
Date	29.1.26

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