



# St Mary's Catholic School

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*where everyone can succeed*



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Dear Parents and Carers,

## RSE Curriculum and Pastoral Programme lessons

You may be aware that the DFE have recently updated their statutory guidance for schools on Relationships, Sex and Health Education and what is compulsory for schools to teach students before the age of 16. At St Mary's, we teach the key elements of this across subjects including RE, Science and our Pastoral Programme. Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) provides an understanding that positive, caring environments are essential for the development of a good self-image. This education should help students to be physically, socially, and emotionally healthy and to develop into responsible and informed members of society. Effective RSE is important if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. At St Mary's Catholic School RSE is to be experienced within the teachings established by the Catholic Church, in a sensitive and open manner.

This year we have updated our Pastoral Programme curriculum to include issues which are relevant for our young people living in today's modern society. Below is an outline of our Pastoral Programme curriculum and the main themes we cover across years 7-11.

- **Spiritual development:** This theme provides students with an opportunity to help develop a real and lasting relationship with God. Core topics include: prayer, religious experiences, spirituality in art, music, architecture and nature as well as spirituality expressed through other religions.
- **Relationship development:** This theme will consider the dignity and intrinsic worth of each individual person. This area will explore what is understood as authentic human love between people made in the image and likeness of God. Within this area, students will explore different types of relationship, what makes a healthy relationship as well as what challenges can be encountered within relationships. Students will also cover age-appropriate sex and health education.
- **Social development:** This theme will develop in our students' social skills, self-awareness and personal well-being. We will also attempt to create an awareness in students of the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations by looking at the social, economic and political dimensions of life. Students will look at equality and diversity and think about how they can promote this in their own lives.
- **Cultural development:** This theme celebrates and acknowledges the rich cultural diversity we have in our world, country and school. Students will be able to explore the varied traditions, faiths and cultural practices associated with a multi-cultural society.
- **Learning development:** This theme aims to develop in our students the skills of an effective learner. These skills will be relevant both in school and in the wider context of life-long learning.
- **Safeguarding:** These lessons aim to explore current safeguarding topics such as the positive and negative aspects social media, e-safety, mental health and self-esteem. Within these lessons, students will be taught the many different ways of keeping safe as well as the risks that are posed to young people within today's modern world.

We are confident that the above curriculum content will be really useful and important for our students, helping them to gain knowledge which will support their wellbeing and holistic development.

In addition, we have updated our RSE policy in line with the above DFE guidance. [This is available on our school website or via this link.](#) This policy is open for parent consultation until Monday 4<sup>th</sup> October. If you do have any thoughts that you would like to share with us then please do get in touch with your child's Head of Year.

Whilst we believe that RSE is a vital part of our students' education and preparation for their future lives, as parents you have the right to withdraw your child from parts of the RSE curriculum. If you would like to discuss this further or you have any queries about this, please contact your child's Head of Year.

Yours faithfully,

Miss Lague  
Director of Student Support