Friday 12th June, 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Consultation on Relationships and Health Education (RHE)

We are writing to inform you about upcoming changes to the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance for Relationships and Health Education (RHE) and to share how these will be reflected in our curriculum at St. Mary's.

From September 2026, all schools will be required to teach the revised 2025 Relationships and Health Education guidance.

The updated guidance places a stronger emphasis on developing both knowledge and practical skills, helping children navigate an increasingly complex and digital world safely, confidently and healthily. It recognises that there is no one-size-fits-all approach and allows schools flexibility to meet the needs of their pupils effectively.

A key focus of the revised guidance is supporting boys to develop a positive sense of masculinity. By challenging harmful stereotypes and encouraging emotional expression and help-seeking behaviours, the guidance aims to improve boys' mental health and wellbeing while fostering respectful relationships for all children.

The guidance also strengthens teaching around positive relationships, including understanding personal boundaries, respect, kindness and consent. This early preventative work is designed to help tackle sexual violence and abusive behaviours by equipping children with the skills they need to build healthy, respectful relationships throughout their lives.

The Department for Education continues to strongly encourage primary schools to provide sex education in Years 5 and 6 to help prepare pupils for their transition to secondary school.

At St. Mary's, we use the **Ten Ten** programme, which provides Catholic primary schools with a comprehensive range of engaging, media-rich resources that fulfil all statutory Relationships and Health Education requirements while reflecting our Catholic ethos and values.

Research demonstrates the importance of delivering high-quality Relationships and Health Education. Without it, children may be at greater risk of poor mental health and unnecessary anxiety. For example, studies show that around 25% of girls begin menstruation before learning about periods in school, which can cause significant distress and confusion. Similarly, 38% of boys experience nocturnal emissions (wet dreams) before receiving education about them, potentially leading to feelings of embarrassment or shame about a natural aspect of development.

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To address this, the updated guidance stipulates that puberty education, including learning about menstruation, should begin from the age of eight. This helps ensure children understand the physical and emotional changes they may experience and are better prepared for them.

Research also shows that children with better physical health, mental health and overall wellbeing are more likely to achieve positive academic outcomes. Learning about healthy relationships, self-respect, respect for others and safe online behaviour can help children enjoy positive friendships and feel more secure, enabling them to focus more effectively on their learning.

We understand that some parents may have concerns that Relationships and Sex Education could encourage sexual experimentation or create confusion regarding sexuality. However, evidence from the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles consistently shows that individuals who reported school lessons as their main source of information about sex were more likely to begin sexual activity at a later age than those who relied primarily on parents or other sources of information.

As part of our consultation process, both you and your child will have opportunities to provide valuable feedback on the programme. We will gather pupil feedback following sessions, and parents and carers are warmly invited to visit the school to view the resources and learn more about the content being taught.

We recognise that parents and carers play a vital role in their child's Relationships and Sex Education. We encourage you to continue conversations about these themes at home, reinforcing the messages children receive in school.

If you have any questions about the programme, would like to view the resources, or require further advice or support, please do not hesitate to contact school.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Ann Kowalska

Headteacher

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