

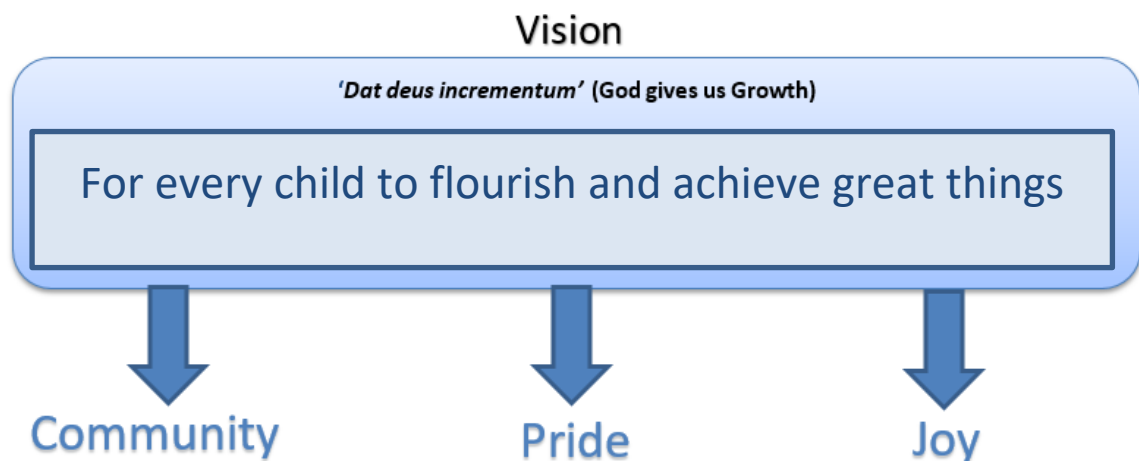


Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Policy Reviewed: July 2023

Date of next Review: July 2024

At St Mary's we are committed to teaching and nurturing the whole child (spiritual, emotional, moral and cultural) to ensure they are ready for their next phase of education. Therefore, we believe the teaching of RSE (relationships and sex education) is integral for our children. Through the age-appropriate content and considerate teaching approach, children leaving St Mary's will be respectful and sensitive of others attitudes and beliefs. Attributes that are fundamental to a child growing up in Modern Britain. The importance of knowledge and education for RSE cannot be underestimated. Every child will have an understanding on how to keep themselves safe and what is caring and respectful behaviours.



It is in this context that we commit ourselves, in partnership with parents, to provide children with a Relationships Education programme which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

Consultation processes:

- Consultation with staff (2020)
- Consultation with parents (2020)
- Consultation with school nurse (2020)
- Consultation with school governors (2021)
- Review with school governors (2022, 2023)

Implementation and Review of Policy

Implementation of the policy took place after the consultation with Governors in the summer term 2020. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head teacher, RSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and Staff. The next review date is July 2024.

Dissemination

The policy will be given to all members of the Governing Body, and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the document will be available to all parents through the school's prospectus, website and a copy is available in the school office. Details of the content of the RSE curriculum will also be published on the school's web site and shared with parents before delivery.

Defining Relationships and Sex Education

DFE guidance defines Relationships Education in Primary Schools as focusing on teaching „the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and adults.”¹ It is about the development of the pupil's knowledge and understanding of herself or himself as an individual 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. Effective school Relationship Education programmes help learners to develop the skills and knowledge appropriate to their age, understanding and development to enable them to make responsible decisions about their relationships and well-being. As a primary school, the focus will 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.

Sex education is not compulsory in Primary Schools and the content set out in this policy therefore focuses on Relationships Education. **We are however legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science**, which are referenced later in this policy. The school recognises that Relationships and Sex Education is **a shared responsibility between home and school**. It is taught with regard to the personal, social, moral and faith development of the child.

¹ Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 4

² Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 19

³ Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 25

Statutory curriculum requirements

Early Years Foundation Stage As part of Reception Year teaching to meet early Learning Goals, children are taught

- To talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one to another.
- To make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes.

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. Elements of RSE taught through the Science Curriculum are:

Key Stage 1

- Notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults.

Key Stage 2

- Describe the differences in the life cycles of a mammal, an amphibian, an insect and a bird.
- Describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals, (including humans in Year 6).
- Describe the changes as humans grow from childhood into adulthood and develop to old age (Year 5).
- Recognise that living things produce offspring of the same kind, and how different living things give birth to their young (including humans in Year 6).
- Recognise that offspring in the same species normally vary and are not identical to their parents.

Statutory guidance for Primary Schools:

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers. (Department for Education Page 20-22)

By the end of Primary School -

<p>Families and people who care for me</p>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability. • the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other’s lives. • that others’ families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children’s families are also characterised by love and care. • that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children’s security as they grow up. • That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong. • How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.
<p>Caring friendships</p>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends. • the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties. • That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. • That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right. • how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.
<p>Respectful Relationships</p>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships. • The conventions of courtesy and manners. • The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. • 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 those in positions of authority. • about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help. • what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive. • the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.
Online Relationships	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not. • that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous. • The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them. • How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. • How information and data is shared and used online.
Being safe	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context). • About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe. • That each person’s body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact. • How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know. • How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult. • How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard. • How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so. • where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources

Rationale

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.

St Mary's is a community-centred school, inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ. 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. As a consequence 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 divine creativity. **RSE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of age appropriate relationship teaching.**

Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales and as advocated by the DFE, 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 at an age-appropriate level.

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. Support will be provided to help pupils deal with different sets of values if required, as indicated by the pupil(s) themselves, their families or a member of the school staff.

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 God's call to love others with a proper respect for their dignity and the dignity of the human body.

Aim of RSE & Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, and 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 persons 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" which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

Objectives

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

- The importance of secure relationships and trustworthy friendships.
- Reverence for, and celebration of, the gift of human life, and the joyful experiences it brings.
- Self-respect and self-worth, engendered by providing accurate knowledge set in the context of Catholic values.
- Respect for pupils' own changing bodies, and for those of others.
- The belief that each human person, created in the image of God, has a unique and special dignity and worth. Dignity and worth are not dependent on age, abilities, social acceptability or any other characteristic.

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

- Reflection on friendships and relationships, recognising the qualities which help friendships and relationships to grow, become stable, and prosper over time.
- Managing emotions within friendships and relationships, and how to cope when these do not run smoothly.
- Understanding that love and kindness are essential to trustworthy friendships, and are the basis of meaningful relationships.
- Managing conflict positively, recognising the value of difference
- Developing self-esteem and confidence, demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others.
- Recognising the importance of the choices that children make, and that they are responsible for the decisions that they make.
- Awareness of peer, social and media pressures, helping children develop the strategies and resilience needed to cope with these.
- Age, context and content appropriate understanding of, and sensitivity to, the beliefs, values and cultures of others.

To know and understand:

- That changes occur to our bodies, feelings and emotions over a period of time.
- That discussion and exploration of pupils' perceptions of relationships and moral choices can take place in a secure and supportive school environment.
- That pupils' spontaneous questions about sexuality, relationships and reproduction will be responded to openly and suitably at an age appropriate level.
- How pupils can care for themselves physically and emotionally.
- The meaning and value of life, with an appreciation of the values of family life in all households.
- The process of procreation as taught through the Science curriculum.
- That trusted adults will help them to correct misinformation and myth.

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 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; a cross-curricular approach and a specific relationships and sex curriculum.

Programmes/Resources

The materials that will be used with pupils when teaching sensitive material will be shared with parents beforehand to prepare parents/carers for children's questions at home.

Resources and support that we use at St Mary's is taken from the following sources:

- SCARF
- Primary Behaviour Service
- Ten: ten
- PSHE association

Teachers will have discussions to decide the best approach for groups and individuals as this will vary cohort to cohort.

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- experiential
- active
- brainstorming
- film & video
- group work
- role-play
- trigger drawings
- values clarification

Assessment

Assessment of PSHE (including RSE) will be very similar to the assessment for Religious Education.

Teachers will use the statutory objectives and use evidence (written work, discussions, observations etc.) to inform whether the child has met those objectives or are close to meeting those objectives.

Parents and carers

We recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents in educating their children. Parents will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSE (e.g. coping with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up, preparing for the challenges that adolescence brings) will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning. The school will support parents by providing material to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help parents to find out more. Parents are a key part in the consultation process of developing this policy before it is ratified by the governors, and will be informed about the details of the school's RSE programme. Parents will be able to view the resources used by the school in the RSE programme, with the aim that every parent will have full confidence in the school's RSE programme to meet their child's needs. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. The Headteacher will automatically grant a request to withdraw a pupil from any sex education delivered in the primary school curriculum, other than as part of the science curriculum. Should parents wish to withdraw their children, accepted best practice guides that they must contact the Headteacher to discuss this decision. This will ensure that the wishes of the parents are understood, and will enable the Headteacher to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Such a meeting would cover the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher. We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed. If concerns still remain, a parent may formally request removal of children in writing, stating exactly from which parts of the programme the child is to be withdrawn. The school will document this process to ensure a record is kept. If a pupil is withdrawn from sex education at their parents' request, the school will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

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. 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.

Roles and Responsibilities regarding to RSE

Responsibility for the specific RSE programme lies with the Headteacher, working alongside the Science and RE Lead Teachers. 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 positive, healthy and trustworthy relationships as between staff, other adults and pupils. They will also be contributing to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.

Other roles and responsibilities regarding to 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.

Head teacher

The Head teacher 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.

PSHE Co-Ordinator

The co-ordinator with the head teacher has a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to RSE and the provision of in-service training.

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.

External Visitors

St Mary's Catholic Primary School may occasionally call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSE and PSHE. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher led sessions. External visitors will be clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in school delivering a session. External visitors will be made aware of who to inform on the school staff in the event of a pupil disclosure or cause for concern, and will ensure that all teaching is not in conflict with Catholic principles and practice. Any visitor must adhere to our code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Checklist for External Speakers to Schools

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. Learning about RSE in PSHE classes will link to/complement learning in those areas identified in the RSE audit.

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 matter 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, and protected from harm and exploitation, by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSE programme. The use of ground rules, established and agreed between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. (See Appendix 1 – Managing difficult questions.) 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 provocative or controversial, or is of a personal nature. 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 support. (See section above Supporting children who are or who may be at risk) 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.

Supporting children who are or who may be 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 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 pupil questions or pupil answers cause a teacher to believe a child may be being abused, or where a teacher suspects that a child or young person is a victim of or is at risk of abuse, the teacher will inform the Head Teacher as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or a Deputy DSL, in line with the school's Child Protection Policy. Staff are required to follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policies immediately in any such situation.

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, head teacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken

Monitoring and Evaluation

The RSE Co-ordinator 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.

Appendix 1: Managing difficult questions

Primary-age pupils will often ask their teachers or other adults questions pertaining to sex or sexuality which go beyond what is set out for Relationships Education. Given ease of access to the internet, children whose questions go unanswered may turn to inappropriate sources of information. Managing difficult questions will require a graduated, age-appropriate programme of Relationships Education. Children of the same age may be developmentally at different stages, leading to differing types of questions or behaviours. Teaching methods should take account of these differences (including when they are due to specific special educational needs or disabilities) and the potential for discussion on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. The school, and class teachers especially, will consider what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting. Teachers may require support and training in answering questions that are better not dealt with in front of a whole class, and this will be addressed as part of the school's professional development provision as necessary.

As a point of general practice, teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting. Many teachers are concerned about responding to unexpected questions or comments from pupils in a whole-class situation. Having a set of ground rules within a class should reduce the chances of this happening, and teachers will receive support and training so that they are prepared for the unexpected.

For example:

- If a question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupil of the ground rules. If the pupil needs further support, the teacher can refer her or him to the appropriate person, such as a parent or carer, a school counsellor, school nurse, helpline, or an outside agency or service;
- If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. In this way, the pupil will feel they have been treated with respect, but the rest of the class will not have to listen to personal experience or inappropriate information. To maintain trust and respect the teacher must remember to talk with the pupil later; and
- If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the school's child protection procedures.