



Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

Matt. 22:36-40

Our Foundation Statement

Cardinal Allen is a Catholic comprehensive school founded to serve the families and parishes of the North Fylde in the Diocese of Lancaster. The declared aims of the School are to foster a growth and commitment to the love and service of Christ through the teachings, doctrines, and practices of the Catholic Church and to be a Christ-centred community in which relationships are marked by that genuine spirit of care which is present in the Christian family.

The School believes that the education and formation of our children is a responsibility shared by parents, carers, teachers, and the Church. Whilst we recognise that parents and carers should be the primary educators of their children, the personal influence of the teacher is of great significance during and beyond school days, for the growing child reflects the influence of those who care for and teach him or her. We accept the fact that such formation is present in all aspects of the School's life - the approach to every task, every aspect of teaching and learning, every form of order, discipline and control, every relationship.

The School willingly accepts its responsibility to provide opportunities for the formation of each person in the community through the mission of integrating human development and the values of Christ:

- ✘ believing that all life and human talents are gifts from God and that we are all formed in the image of Christ
- ✘ recognising the need of all individuals for growth and development irrespective of circumstance, gender or race

- ✘ communicating the Christian message of love and service, and values of justice, acceptance, tolerance, respect and friendship
- ✘ creating a secure, caring, Christian and happy environment
- ✘ providing opportunities for work and learning that give a sense of satisfaction, achievement and self-respect
- ✘ developing the necessary life-skills of communication, creativity, problem solving, decision-making, as well as the informational framework that will prepare individuals for life in the 21st century.

Vision for Human Relationships and Sex Education

At Cardinal Allen we are inspired by Jesus to be the very best we can be. We look after one another and show respect and love through our relationships with one another. Jesus is invited into our hearts. In the Beatitudes, Jesus invites us to lead a full life with him by explaining what makes people blessed or happy. This is about understanding how loving our neighbour enables us to be happy too. Therefore, having a good relationship with ourselves and the other people in our lives makes us grow and flourish and we respect that everyone is a unique and beautiful part of God’s creation. We are all children of God, called to grow in love for him through the person of Jesus Christ and to spread the Good News through the action of the Holy Spirit.

Policy Formulation

The following groups have been consulted as part of producing this policy:

- pupils, parents, staff, governors, and the Diocesan Education Service.

A draft policy was shared with all groups and responses were considered in drawing up the approved policy. The approved policy is on the school website and has been shared with the Diocesan Education Service. The policy was initially implemented in September 2021 and it is the duty of the Governing Body to ensure that it is up to date and reviewed every three years. As such, this revised policy is the outcome of a review which was undertaken in Autumn 2023. The next review date, subject to external policy and guidance changes, will be Autumn 2026.

Rationale

As a Catholic High School in the Diocese of Lancaster Education Service, we use the term Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) as we believe that relationships education is about all aspects of growing a fulfilled and happy life, and sexual education is a dimension of this greater whole. For example:

The defining belief of Christianity is that God took on human form. This endows the human form with an extraordinary dignity that goes beyond that of all other forms of life and shows that humanity alone can embrace this relationship with God. Therefore, our relationship with our own bodies is not casual but infused with the Holy Spirit. Any teaching about love and sexual relationships in school must be rooted in this belief which is expressed in the Church’s teaching about relationships, marriage, sex and family life. The Church offers education to young people as it is part of complete human formation. Education about human love is no less a part of a Catholic school’s responsibility than teaching about Mathematics or English. At Cardinal Allen we teach young people about how to form relationships, including understanding loving relationships and acknowledging that young people’s first experience of love is in the home. We encourage the young people in our school from the earliest age to recognise that they are all children of God and that each person shares a God given dignity. As our children mature, we encourage them to follow the example of Jesus and live lives inspired by the Gospel virtues, enabling them to follow His commandment to “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Mark 12:31).

We also encourage young people to know that God's love for humanity is so great, he is waiting to forgive us.

"We are all sinners, but God heals us with an abundance of grace and mercy." Pope Francis

This is the basis for all relationships in our school. Teaching about relationships in our schools is supported by Christian virtue teaching as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and in line with 'Fit for Mission? Schools'.

The Department for Education in 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019) states that:

"To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support."

The Diocese recognises the value of these curriculum aims. However, Catholic schools also have regard for the spiritual welfare of the students and recognise that to know and love God brings lasting happiness.

Statutory Framework

The statutory framework replaces Statutory Guidance: 'Sex and Relationships Education Guidance' (2000). The DfE states that it intends to update the guidance every three years.

The statutory guidance is available from the [DfE](#). This should be read in conjunction with the Diocesan guidance and the following documents:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) - statutory guidance
- [Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool](#) - a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline
- [Behaviour and Discipline in Schools](#) - advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils
- [Equality Act 2010](#) and [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools](#)
- [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#) - statutory guidance
- [Alternative Provision](#) - statutory guidance
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#) - advice for schools
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) - advice for schools, including advice on cyberbullying
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools](#) - advice for schools
- [The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance](#) - provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts
- [Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools](#) - guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC)
- [SMSC requirements for independent schools](#) - guidance for independent schools on how they should support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- [National Citizen Service](#) - guidance for schools

Purpose of the Statutory Guidance

The guidance intends to help children and young people develop. The knowledge and attributes they gain will support their own, and others’ wellbeing and attainment, and help young people to become successful and happy adults who make a meaningful contribution to society. The Diocese of Lancaster agrees with these aims and seeks to support them through the appropriate development of the HRSE provision.

The table below summarises statutory requirements:

Relationships Education	Relationship and Sex Education	Health Education
All schools providing primary education, including all-through schools and middle schools (includes schools as set out in the Summary section).	All schools providing secondary education, including all-through schools and middle schools (see Summary section of statutory guidance).	All maintained schools including schools with a sixth form, academies, free schools, non- maintained special schools and alternative provision, including pupil referral units. The statutory requirement to provide Health Education does not apply to independent schools – PSHE is already compulsory as independent schools must meet the Independent School Standards as set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Independent Schools, however, may find the principles on Health Education helpful in planning an age-appropriate curriculum.

Virtues and Values

Gospel virtues and values underpin the HRSE curriculum. The Christian tradition describes behaviours or habits that lead to happiness, human flourishing and a closer relationship with God as virtues. These virtues are described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and fall into two groups. The theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (sometimes love is used instead) are about developing the habits of being open to the work of the Holy Spirit and developing a deeper relationship with God through living a balanced and happy, good life. The cardinal virtues of practical wisdom (prudence), justice, fortitude and temperance help people develop habits of reason, fairness, emotional resilience and self-mastery. They are human virtues and, as such, are part of the development of people of all faiths, or none, as they learn how to flourish, thrive and to have a life supported by strong and caring relationships. The cardinal virtues are drawn from the teachings of Plato and Aristotle and are held in common with people of many faiths and secular beliefs. St. Thomas Aquinas attributes the theological virtues as having their foundation in God, they complete the cardinal virtues and are the way people can reach “the abundant life” (John 10:10).

At Cardinal Allen, we live out the Gospel values and virtues shared in the scriptures. The Beatitudes highlight these values; faithfulness, forgiveness, dignity, humility, truth, tolerance, respect and service, and they underpin all that we strive for. We expect all members of our school community to uphold these values in our relationships with one another. Inspired by the word of God, and guided by faith, we aim for our pupils to come to know the true nature of human relationships. We are expected to be models of tolerance and respect towards all, upholding our core values at all times. The Catholic life of our school is strengthened through the communication between our LIFE programme, HRSE, RE and Chaplaincy. Throughout both the curriculum, and our collective worship programme of prayer, assemblies, and spiritual formation, pupils are given every opportunity to grow in virtue. This includes developing their conscience; furthering their understanding of what is right and true, considering the importance of decision making, and coming to know their true potential and worth. Pupils are challenged to reflect on their behaviour and attitude in relation to the choices they make. We are committed to ensuring that pupils are able to do this in a safe and compassionate environment, knowing that growth in virtue, and the ability to stand up and recognise truth, beauty and goodness in the world, is how our pupils achieve a closer relationship with God. This enables our pupils to become authentically happy and well-rounded individuals, living full lives.

The Aim and Objectives of HRSE

The aim of HRSE is part of our aim to educate the complete human person. This is expressed in *Fit for mission? Schools* (2009).

“The fundamental needs of the human person are the focus of Catholic education – intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual, and eschatological (Our eternal destiny). These fundamental needs can only be truly fulfilled through a rich and living encounter with the deepest truths about God and the human person.

This is why Christ and His Gospel must be the foundation of the educational project of each school and college, because He is ‘the perfect Man in whom all human values find their fullest perfection’ (Congregation for Catholic Education, The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School). Therefore, the Catholic school or college is called to keep the Gospel whole and alive amongst pupils, families, and staff.”

HRSE should deepen the following areas of understanding:

- To develop self-respect and love of self;
- To invite young people to develop and deepen a loving relationship with God;
- To invite young people to understand that their life has a purpose;
- To invite young people to develop and deepen relationships with each other based on mutual respect and care and to understand this can be an expression of God’s love;
- To foster an understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church about how to live a full life, a life of virtue, and the place of human sexuality in living a full life, marriage and parenthood;
- A strong awareness of their own safety and the nature of consent;
- To have an understanding of the law in England about Equality and Marriage, appropriate to age and maturity.

HRSE will develop attitudes, personal and social skills and knowledge and understanding:

- We will seek to develop attitudes of awe and wonder for the gift and beauty of self, respect for each other as children of God and rejoice in the goodness of God’s creation;
- We will foster an atmosphere in school which celebrates the work of the Trinity through the life of the school and its relationship with the Church;
- We will teach children about the beauty of the Church’s teaching about love and God’s love for them which is shared in the Sacraments;
- We will sensitively share the Church’s teaching about the importance of marriage and family life as a way to live in loving relationships with others and with God;
- We will seek to develop attitudes of responsibility towards ourselves and others, recognising the dignity in all;
- We will seek to enable students to understand the choices they make and how they can help or harm themselves and others;
- We will encourage students to learn about expressing their own emotions and being respectful of the emotions and behaviours of others;
- We will encourage the whole school to be like a loving family recognising God as a merciful and generous father as Jesus taught in the Lord’s prayer;
- We will encourage everyone in the school to recognise their part in the school family and work together for reconciliation when relationships in the school falter;
- We will encourage everyone in the school to value humility, mercy and compassion and to respond with empathy to the problems of others;

- We will develop students' knowledge of when to say 'no' to behaviours or attitudes that harm their dignity or the dignity of others and to be responsible for managing their own risk;
- We will develop students' experience of what it is to be truly happy so that they begin to understand the difference between happiness and gratification, satisfying the spirit rather than the senses;
- We will teach them the virtue of patience;
- We will teach students about the media and their choices, about what to watch, what games to play, what rules apply, especially when using social media, and that the dignity of all does not just apply to people who are physically seen, it applies to online relationships too;
- We will encourage students to develop their own moral framework about accessing information online;
- We will encourage students to recognise the influence of peer pressure and the moral integrity required to say "no";
- We will support students when relationships in their lives are challenging and teach them that there are people in school who will listen if they are experiencing changes that make them frightened or uncomfortable;
- We will teach students about legally protected characteristics and their duty to respect difference;
- We will teach students about the damage that drugs and alcohol can do to relationships with the self, as well as others;
- We will teach young people that God is merciful and always waiting for us to be reconciled with him.

Inclusion

At Cardinal Allen we identify that young people mature in different ways. Our teaching about relationships and sexuality is respectful of each child's starting point, their faith, culture and sexual orientation. Lessons are framed by this understanding and young people are encouraged to respect difference and develop an approach of dialogue. Cardinal Allen has adopted Lancashire County Council's Transgender Policy.

Through LIFE Learning and specific Enrichment Days, we have a variety of outside agencies who provide excellent support in the delivery of sensitive issues. Women's Aid, in particular, provide a lot of support and work with the youngsters in small groups, and offer individual support where needed.

Equality

Cardinal Allen endeavours to do its best for all of the pupils, irrespective of ability (physical and mental), race, ethnicity, nationality, maternity, pregnancy, sex, gender identity or orientation or whether they are looked after children. (See school's [Equality Information and Objectives Policy](#))

Our primary mission, as a Catholic school, is to the poor and to seek to alleviate any disadvantage. Our attention is also focused on the SEND Code of Practice when planning HRSE so as to ensure the inclusion of all our students in a way that is appropriate for them. We strive to ensure that our **Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education, is accessible for all pupils and will be borne in mind when planning for pupils with special educational needs** and disabilities who represent a significant minority of pupils.

Quality First Teaching in all classrooms ensures that work is differentiated and accessible for all pupils. Pupils with SEND have *Individual Education Plans* which are shared with teaching staff to enable specific strategies to be put in place in order to meet individual needs. All pupils with SEND also have access to a Key Worker, who is available for support when needed and who work closely with the SENDCO to ensure that their progress, both academic and emotional, is monitored carefully. Where pupils with SEND face significant difficulties and have Education and Health Care Plans, individualised and bespoke programmes of support are delivered in order to suit their needs

and ensure that they can access the curriculum. Teachers are advised to ensure that language used is suitable for the ability level of pupils in their classes and that important information and key vocabulary are regularly revisited. Pupils with SEND who display aggressive behaviour or need support with managing social interactions and friendships often follow the 'Talkabout for Teenagers' programme which addresses these areas of difficulty and allows pupils to learn strategies which they can use.

For pupils who experience vulnerability, school engage in the CAF process and work closely with agencies such as Child and Family Wellbeing, Lancashire Assisted Therapy, CAMHS, YouTherapy, Phoenix and Butterfly Projects, Social Services and many other outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support they need.

The work to support pupils with SEND and those who are vulnerable is regularly monitored by a link governor with specific responsibility for these areas. The link governor receives a termly report from the SENDCO and visits the Learning Support Department to ensure that the correct support is being offered.

The critical characteristic of Catholic education is that all people are children of God. With this belief underpinning school life, perceived limits on students because of their characteristics must always be subject to challenge as the school is part of the Universal Catholic Church. It is through this lens that schools should challenge stereotypes and address behaviours such as homophobia, misogyny and sexism. Schools must be alive to the fact that the approach of the Church may not be the same as the approach taken in other areas of life, such as social media. A clear and consistent message about human dignity will be conveyed through the whole of our school life by staff, students and those who support the work of the school such as governors.

Governors at Cardinal Allen understand the implications of the DfE's 2017 guidance (Updated 2018) [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#) for their school. The guidance covers what sexual violence and harassment is, schools' and colleges' legal responsibilities, a whole school or college approach to safeguarding and child protection and how to respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Sadly, students can believe that sexual violence and harassment are just part of growing up.

These aspects of school life are challenged and a culture of respect fostered based on reciprocal dignity with specific reference to the age of the students. For example, in IT Year 7 pupils are taught about the danger of assuming an on-line persona and on-line Stranger Danger. LIFE Learning lessons in Year 9 (the topic is briefly touched on in Year 8) focus on the social consequences of sharing explicit images.

Safeguarding training occurs annually for teaching and associate staff on issues such as CSE. Up to date information on safeguarding issues is disseminated in staff briefings and/or via e-mails. Lancashire County's [7-Minute Briefings](#) are shared regularly with staff.

All teaching in HRSE, including that which covers areas around the protected characteristics, is sensitive to the age, cultural background and family experiences of students. The Catholic view of human dignity challenges the cultural assumptions that can underpin prejudices, such as racism, sexism and religious discrimination. **Here at Cardinal Allen we robustly challenge homophobia or any inequitable behaviours based on a person's sexual orientation or gender as an infringement of human dignity.** Although we will teach the Church's view on what it means to be human, and the challenges this offers to a wide range of lifestyles, the needs of the individual students will remain paramount. We aim to see the child, a Child of God, as a person in need of love and care.

The DfE's guidance makes specific mention of teaching about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender characteristics, which it shortens to LGBT.

The guidance states, "At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT, they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson. Schools are free to determine how they do this, and we expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at an appropriate point as part of this area of the curriculum."

This is normally covered in the Year 9 Enrichment Day by the visiting LGBT team. Tackling homophobia is covered in Year 8's Relationship module.

At Cardinal Allen we address questions about sexuality and gender as and when they arise. Our school's behaviour policy identifies all protected characteristics as triggers for aggressive or bullying behaviours. We train all staff to support students who are asking questions about themselves or others in these areas in partnership with their families and they know the legal requirements incumbent on the school with specific possible reference to sex or gender requirements. The dignity of each student is central to our care and we support any questioning child and their families through a culture of listening and seeing them as a person. We do not rush to label but offer children and their families time to discuss and explore what is best for them as individuals within our school community. As a school, we work to challenge all limiting stereotypes around sexuality and gender identities and work to enable each young person to fulfil their God given potential." The Year 8 Relationship Module, Year 9 Enrichment Day in PSCHEE, the Year 7 Creation Module, the Year 9 Relationships Unit cover these aspects.

Programme of study

A revised programme of study has been prepared to support educators in our family of schools as they enable our young people to grow in faith and understanding of themselves, their relationship with God and with one another. The Department for Education has prepared a statutory programme for 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' which will be a compulsory requirement from September 2020. The Diocese of Lancaster began working on Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) in 2016.

The intent of the programme of study is to encourage young people to recognise their interior beauty, their dignity as a human and through this to understand and value the worth of others. We hope that this builds on the experience of the home where, as children, we all experience our first expressions of love and form our early relationships. The challenge in school life is to develop this not just in an academic sense, but as a lived expression of belief ultimately, an invitation to hear the Good News.

"We must wonder! We must create an environment of wonder! We must create a climate of wonder! This task is closest to the family...Wonder is needed so that beauty might enter into human life, into society and the nation...We need to marvel at everything that is found in man." Pope St. John Paul II

Creating a climate of wonder can seem a far cry from the modern world our schools are called to serve, though this is our calling as educators in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Lancaster. Engaging with the Church's teaching about human loving enables us to share with our young people the wonder of human life and the happiness that is waiting for us in Jesus. As always, this is an invitation, a way to deepen understanding of what it means to be fully human.

The Programme of Study places the Diocese of Lancaster programme next to the statutory obligation it fulfils. Any additional material in HRSE is written in italics so it is easy to identify. Areas from the statutory plan not covered in the HRSE framework are listed at the end of the booklet. Governing bodies and head teachers should be mindful that from 2020 Ofsted will inspect the new 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' and Section 48 will continue to examine provisions in HRSE.

Pupils are taught to understand human relationships and the associated moral teaching through an organised programme in RE, LIFE and through Enrichment Days. Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) is integrated into this programme so as to meet the needs of the pupils as they grow and develop through adolescence.

LIFE: Living in Fullness Everyday

At Cardinal Allen our LIFE programme covers all aspects of Personal Development.

LIFE stands for 'Living in Fullness Everyday' and is based on John 10 10: "I came that you may have life, life in all its fullness". As a Catholic school, Pope Francis calls us to "nurture the desire for truth, goodness and beauty that lies in the heart of each individual, so that all may learn how to love life and be open to the fullness of life,"

LIFE Learning

LIFE Learning are our personal development lessons at Cardinal Allen. We have a comprehensive five-year programme which fully covers all PSCH EE requirements. The delivery model for LIFE Learning was amended in September 2023, and it is now taught during a discrete 45 minute slot each Wednesday. Teachers of LIFE Learning are attached to one year group and have one topic which they teach six times in the year to all form groups on a rota.

LIFE Enhancing Days

To compliment the LIFE Learning programme, all year groups also have one drop-down day a year where they focus on a particular element of personal development. These days involve experiences that cannot always be delivered in timetabled lessons and involve guest speakers coming into school to work with our pupils. Staff who would usually be teaching the year group support the sessions. Mrs Orwin co-ordinates LIFE Learning and the LIFE Enriching days.

LIFE Enriching

LIFE Enriching activities are all those which are above and beyond the formal, timetabled curriculum. These include guest speakers, external visits and extra-curricular activities. Cardinal Allen prides itself on the range of extra-curricular activities which our pupils enjoy. All staff are encouraged to consider how they can contribute to this. We track attendance with enrichment activities through a central spreadsheet register. This is shared with all staff and allows us to track pupil engagement and further encourage those pupils who maybe more reluctant than others.

Parents

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children and we will strive to support parents in this task. Our role should be that of assisting and completing the work of parents, furnishing children and adolescents with an evaluation of "*sexuality as value and task of the whole person, created male and female in the image of God*". (Educational Guidance in Human Love (1983) Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education n69) Children's first experience of relationships and love are in the home. At Cardinal Allen we seek to work with parents and support them as their children grow and begin to develop their own character as well as experiencing changes in their physical appearance. Parents have been consulted about this policy before it was ratified by the governing body by sharing it and asking for feedback via Class Charts and through discussions at *Cardinal Allen Family and Community Association (CAFCA)*.

The school will involve and support parents in learning about HRSE by sharing the programme of learning and associated resources, informing parents when visitors are coming to school when a sensitive subject is to be taught, and by listening to questions and suggestions.

Information about HRSE will be on the school's website and the majority of the programme of learning is developed through the ethos of the school and in discrete lessons. However, at times, areas of particular sensitivity may benefit from additional parental support.

Right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw)

Parents have the right to request that their child not participate in some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request, it would be good practice for the headteacher to discuss the application with parents and ensure that they understand the nature and purpose of the curriculum in a Catholic context. A discussion should follow, as appropriate, involving the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Schools will want to record and document this process.

If parents express a wish to withdraw their child from the sessions, the headteacher will discuss with them the benefits of receiving this education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on their child. For example, the possible social or emotional impact of withdrawal, the likelihood of them hearing a peer's version of the content, rather than the teacher's. However, parents may prefer to discuss sex education to their child at home instead.

Following discussions, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, Cardinal Allen will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. This process is applicable for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the headteacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision.

Should parents wish to withdraw their child(ren) they must contact the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher no later than the start of the school day when the lesson will take place.

Teaching HRSE

The Curriculum Leader for LIFE Learning has leadership responsibility for HRSE and it is her role to work with colleagues in continually developing the programme of learning and monitoring standards. Mrs. M Moran (Foundation Governor), the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher for Catholic Life and Personal Development, and the School Chaplain have responsibility for reviewing provision of HRSE across the school.

Teaching and learning about human relationships will be part of the life of our school. However, the programme of learning will be taught through cross curricular dimensions where appropriate, such as Religious Education, Science, Computing, and enrichment days. Sometimes, learning will be best supported by using other agencies, such as the school nurse, or other visitors to school. Such visitors will only be used where they understand and agree to uphold the teachings and principles of the Catholic Church and be guided to read the protocol for visitors at Cardinal Allen and agree to follow its instruction.

All staff involved are expected to foster positive attitudes, Gospel virtues and shape behaviour based on a Christian understanding of how to lead a good life. Staff are called to be role models of the school's ethos in their relationships with other staff members, their conduct towards parents and their care for the children in our school. Staff who are not Catholic themselves must conduct their behaviour in school in accordance with the vision and mission of the school.

Dealing with difficult questions

Cardinal Allen's Governing Body expects that HRSE lessons take place in a positive framework, where students experience a growing appreciation for well-being, and that of others, and a deeper understanding that the Church teaches a path of the wholeness of mind, body and spirit. Part of this is creating an atmosphere where questions can be asked openly, knowing that their questions will be answered, and understanding that staff or other students will not judge these questions. It is vital, therefore, that teachers invest time in creating this framework of mutual trust and care while respecting personal information. The HRSE Co-ordinator must be given access to support, and training to facilitate teachers to enable such discussions by creating carefully negotiated ground rules and distancing strategies. The Department for Education (2000) offers the following guidance for dealing with questions.

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, and having a set of ground rules should reduce the chances of this happening. Teachers will need 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 school counsellor, school nurse, helpline, or an outside agency or service;
- If a teacher doesn't know the answer to a question, it is essential to acknowledge this, and to suggest that the pupil or teacher or both together research the subject later;
- If a problem 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 received respectful treatment, 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 our school's Safeguarding Protocols and Procedures.

When any sensitive subjects are covered in HRSE they will always be framed so that the young people who are participating know that there is pastoral support if any of the issues discussed make them feel the need to talk further or share confidential information. All staff at Cardinal Allen undertake Safeguarding Training annually, know where to access the school's Safeguarding Policy on the school website, and who the three DSLs in school are to whom they can refer any concerns.

The school will ensure that this policy is available for all staff, governors, parents and students, and the confidential nature of how to obtain advice and guidance as a result of any issues or questions that may arise. We will encourage our pupils to talk to their parents or carers about issues and questions that arise as part of the programme. It will be made clear to pupils, parents/carers and staff that unconditional confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where illegal or abusive concerns come to light, and these will be dealt with according to the school's Safeguarding Protocols and Procedures. (Please see the school's [Safeguarding Policy](#))

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