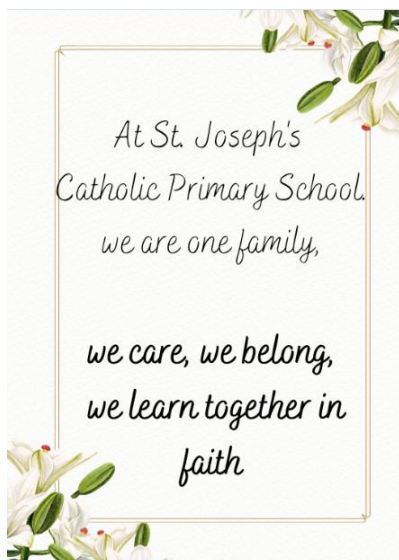




Human Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Name and address of school:	St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Head teacher:	Mrs. Annette Savage
Chair of Governors:	Miss Angela Quirk
HRSE lead:	Mrs. Emily Halligan
Nominated governor:	Mrs. Sue Blair
Date of reviewed:	15.10.24
Date of review:	Sept. 2025

1. Vision and Mission



Our Vision

In the faithful care of St Joseph, Jesus prospered. Our vision is to provide a happy, caring and stimulating environment where children aim high and achieve to their full potential.

Our Mission

St Joseph's is a Catholic primary school where everybody is welcomed.

We:

- ☑ promote the partnership of home, school, church and community;
- ☑ pray together, grow in faith and live the Gospel values;
- ☑ respect and care for everyone and everything around us;
- ☑ value each child as an individual;
- ☑ encourage our pupils to develop active and creative minds;
- ☑ promote self-esteem and confidence;
- ☑ set high standards of learning;
- ☑ celebrate the achievements of each and every child.

2. Procedures

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

- Staff;
- governing body;
- parents and carers;
- Diocesan Education Service.

This consultation has involved discussion at staff and governor meetings and an invitation to parents and carers to submit their views to the school.

In consultation with the Governing Body, the policy was implemented in September 2020, reviewed every (three years), by the Head teacher, HRSE Subject Leader, the Governing Body and school staff. The next review date is (September 2025).

The policy will be circulated to all members of the Governing Body and all members of staff. The school website contains a link to the policy. The Education Service will be sent a copy of the school's HRSE policy and it is the duty of the Governing Body to ensure that this is up-to-date.

3. Rationale

As a primary school in the Diocese of Lancaster Education Service, we use the term Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) as it believes that relationships education is about all aspects of growing a fulfilled and happy life, sexual education is a dimension of this greater whole.

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 St. Joseph's Catholic Junior School we teach young people about how to form relationships, including understanding loving relationships and acknowledging that children's first experience of love is in the home. We encourage children from the earliest age to recognise that they are all children of God and that each person shares a God-given dignity. As 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). 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 well-being, 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." P.8

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.

5a. 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 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>). It should be read in conjunction with this 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 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 summarises statutory obligations:

Relationships Education	Relationships 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 in the guidance on Health Education helpful in planning an age-appropriate curriculum.

5b. Requirements of the Diocese of Lancaster

The Bishop of Lancaster requires that all schools within the Diocese have a policy in line with Section 48 inspection requirements. (The term sex and relationships should be replaced in policies with human relationships and sex education.)

The key points within this guidance are as follows:

1. All schools must have an up-to-date HRSE policy that may incorporate Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education policy drawn up by the governing body, and available to parents and for inspection.
2. This should be developed in consultation with parents and the wider community.
3. Primary schools should have clear parameters on what children will be taught in the transition year before moving to secondary school, and that parents be consulted.
4. All schools' policies must include how they will teach Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education.

6. 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 St. Joseph's Catholic Junior School we live out the Gospel values shared in the Beatitudes, throughout the life of school by sharing a rich prayer life that includes a focus on gospel values, giving priority to maintaining and enriching the quality of our relationships, abiding by our code of conduct and participating in the sacraments together.

Staff aim to live out the Gospel values and virtues and encourage children to do the same. Throughout their time at school, children are enabled to progress in knowledge about moral behaviour. They are encouraged to say thank you to God and cheerfully care about other people in the ways that Jesus demonstrated. Kindness is valued and actively encouraged. Children have opportunities to evaluate their behaviour and give reasons for the choices they have made. They are given opportunities daily to learn how prayer enables them to make space for God in their lives and offers opportunities for reflection and growth.

7. 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:

- i) To develop self-respect and love of self;
- ii) To invite young people to develop and deepen a loving relationship with God;
- iii) To invite young people to understand that their life has a purpose;
- iv) 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;
- v) 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;
- vi) A strong awareness of their own safety and the nature of consent;
- vii) To have an understanding of the law in England about Equality and Marriage, appropriate to age and maturity.

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 seek to develop attitudes of responsibility towards ourselves and others, recognising the dignity in all.

We will seek to enable children to understand the choices they make and how they can help or harm themselves and others.

We will encourage children 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 recognize 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 children’s knowledge of when to say ‘no’ to behaviours or attitudes that harm their dignity or the dignity of others and to be responsible for their own safety.

We will develop children’s experience of what it is to be happy so that they begin to understand the difference between happiness and gratification and value patience.

We will teach children about the media and their choices, about what to watch, what games to play, what rules apply and that the dignity of all does not just apply to people who are physically seen, it applies to online relationships too.

We will support children 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 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 encourage children to understand difference and be mindful of people who are vulnerable to discrimination because of their personal or cultural characteristics.

We will ensure health education prepares children fully for a happy, healthy, full and long life.

8. Inclusion

At St. Joseph's Catholic Junior School 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 encouraged to respect difference and develop an approach of dialogue.

9. Equality

The governing body has wide obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to ensure that St. Joseph's Catholic Junior School 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.

Further guidance is available for schools from the Catholic Education Service at <https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/guidance-for-schools/equality>. The guidance covers the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and working with students of other faiths in Catholic schools.

The 2010 Act identifies the following protected characteristics applicable to pupils, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). Age is also a protected characteristic. It does not apply to students, but governors should be aware of this aspect as employers.

The school has a separate Equality Policy where further information about the protected characteristics and the school's safeguards and provisions can be found.

Teaching reflects the law as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the broader legal implications of decisions they may make.

Catholic schools should be mindful that our primary mission is to the poor and seek to alleviate any disadvantage. Attention should also focus on the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects to ensure the inclusion of all students in a way that is appropriate for them. Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education, must be accessible for all pupils and must be borne in mind when planning for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities who represent a significant minority of pupils.

Governors ensure teaching is differentiated, personalised and accessible by regularly monitoring the work of the SEND co-ordinator. Education prepares students for adulthood, for example, as needed, pupils with SEND are supported to deal with aggressive behaviour, exploitation and bullying. Students experiencing acute moments of vulnerability due to family circumstances, such as bereavement, social anxieties, specific physical or mental health problems receive support in school and where appropriate through links with outside agencies. In some cases, students may require a personal plan for their education in this area to match their needs and stage of development, reflecting statutory requirements.

Governors monitor that the Equality Policy is fully implemented, for example, through reporting of incidents of bullying based on the protected characteristics of the Equalities Act in the Headteacher's report, monitoring students' academic outcomes with an active awareness of differences based on sex, ethnic or cultural grouping, financial challenges (for example pupil premium) and the progress made by SEND students. Additionally, the school would consider taking decisive action to support a religious group

if evidence showed that they were subject to harassment or if evidence suggested a racial minority was experiencing abusive behaviour in some way through use of whole school strategies, such as assemblies to challenge stereotypes.

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 the school challenges stereotypes and address behaviours such as homophobia, misogyny and sexism. A clear and consistent message about human dignity is conveyed through the whole of school life by staff, students and those who support the work of the school such as governors.

Governors at St. Joseph's Catholic Junior School understand the implications of the DfE's 2017 guidance *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 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 is fostered based on reciprocal dignity with specific reference to the age of the children. For example, children learn the nature of personal privacy, to respect their own bodies. Training takes place to support staff in this area alongside other safeguarding training.

All teaching in HRSE, including that which covers areas around the protected characteristics, must be sensitive to the age, cultural background and family experiences of students. The Catholic view of human dignity should challenge the cultural assumptions that can underpin prejudices, such as racism, sexism and religious discrimination. Catholic schools should robustly challenge homophobia or any inequitable behaviours based on a person's sexual orientation or gender as an infringement of human dignity. Though schools 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. In a Catholic school, 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."

At St. Joseph's Catholic Junior School we address questions about sexuality and gender as and when they arise. Our school's behaviour policy identifies all protected characteristics as possible triggers for aggressive or bullying behaviours. We train all staff to support children 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 reference to sex or gender requirements. The dignity of each child 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.

10. 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.

A wide range of teaching strategies are used and clear ground rules for discussions are established. Parents and carers are informed about the content of the programme and lessons will always take account of the Child Protection Policy.

The elements of the statutory curriculum not covered in the HRSE programme of study, such as basic first aid, aspects of health education and online safety are covered through the school’s wider PSHE curriculum.

11. Parents

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children. The school should support parents in this task. The role of the school 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 our schools 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. The programme of study is and details of the resources used are displayed on the school website. Parents and carers will be informed when a sensitive subject is to be taught.

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. Parent and carers should contact the headteacher who will deal with such requests and keep a written record of the outcome.

Good practice is likely to include the headteacher discussing with parents the benefits of receiving this education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the 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.

12. Teaching and Assessing HRSE

Class teachers and trained HLTAs will deliver the programme with the support on occasions of outside agencies (e.g. health professionals).

Teaching and learning about human relationships will be part of the life of the school. However, the programme of study will be taught through use of the *Life to the Full programme in Relationship Education for Catholics schools* and through cross-curricular dimensions where appropriate, such as R.E., PSHE, science and computing.

There are elements of the statutory framework that are not covered in the Diocese of Lancaster's HRSE programme. These elements are listed at the end of the 2020 programme of study. These aspects of the statutory framework are covered in the science, computing and PSHE curriculum.

Assessment forms part of the statutory framework. The HRSE programme includes a self-audit for schools. Each year at St. Joseph's Catholic Junior School we use the Diocesan self-audit to monitor all aspects of HRSE. Governors use the CES RSE audit tools to monitor their knowledge and understanding of this area. The HRSE framework and the elements of the statutory framework not covered by HRSE are monitored and assessed through whole school planning, written pieces of work, teacher's notes on discussions and targeted lesson evaluations. On occasion, the school uses questionnaires to evaluate students sense of well-being and may use written or practical assessments where appropriate, for example, to evaluate understanding of basic first aid.

13. Dealing with difficult questions

The Governing Body desires 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 Subject Leader must be given access to train and support to facilitate teachers to enable such discussions by creating carefully negotiated ground rules and distancing strategies. The Department for Education (2000) offers the following guidelines 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. Having a set of ground rules should reduce the chances of this happening, but teachers will need support and training so that they prepare 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 the school's child protection procedures.¹

Sensitive subjects in HRSE always need to 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 teaching HRSE have up-to-date safeguarding professional development.

Questions asked by students that are a cause for concern for the teacher, for example, because of their

explicit or graphic content, should be addressed following the school's Child Protection Policy and confidentiality procedures.

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. Students will be encouraged to talk to their parents or carers about issues and questions that arise as part of the programme. It will be made clear to all that unconditional confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where illegal or abusive concerns come to light, and these will be dealt with under the terms of the Child Protection Policy.

¹Sex and Relationships Guidance, 4.5 'Dealing with questions' 0116/2000

14. Supporting children and young people deemed to be at risk.

Sensitive subjects in HRSE always need to 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. This will be done within the safeguarding framework of the school.