

Federation of St James the Great and St John's Catholic Schools

Policy for Relationship and Sex Education



MISSION

As a Federation we see Education as the growth and development of the whole person. Our aim is to integrate the pupil's spiritual, moral, social, cultural, psychological and physical development; thus assisting them to grow in Christian maturity. The federation aims to ensure all children are given the opportunity to experience a broad and balanced curriculum.

We have chosen the Ten Ten 'Life to the full' programme for the schools in the Federation to follow, following successful use of their prayer and worship resources. Ten Ten, have provided a comprehensive and fully-resourced Scheme of Work in statutory Relationship Education within a Catholic context. The programme will include Sexual Relationship Education focus lessons as well as coverage of elements of the programme in Religious Education and PSHE lessons.

The programme has 3 modules which are Created and Loved by God, Created to Love Others and Created to live in Community. These modules are broken down further into topics.

Created and Loved by God:

- Religious Understanding
- Me, my body, my health
- Emotional well-being
- Life cycles

Created to Love Others:

- Religious Understanding
- Personal relationships
- Keeping Safe

Created to live in Community

- Religious Understanding
- Living in the Wider World

All topics are taught by the class teacher who know the children best. All children in this school are individuals and come from many different backgrounds and family structure. All are valued.

DEFINING RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION

The DfE guidance states that "children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way". It is about the development of the pupil's knowledge and understanding of her or him as a sexual 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. In primary schools the focus should 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." This would include the topics of families, people who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

STATUTORY CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

RATIONALE

'I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL' (John.10.10)

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.

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 relationship as it is there that sexuality grows and develops.

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.

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.

VALUES AND VIRTUES

The 'Life to the Full' 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 the God's call to love others with a proper respect for their dignity and the dignity of the human body. The following virtues will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

Objectives

To develop the following attitudes and virtues:

reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility;
respect for the dignity of every human being — in their own person and in the person of others;
joy in the goodness of the created world and their own bodily natures;
responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others;
recognising and valuing their own sexual identity;
celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love;
recognising the importance of marriage and family life.

To develop the following personal and social skills:

making sound judgements and good choices which have integrity, and which are respectful of the individual's commitments;
loving and being loved, and the ability to form friendships and loving, stable relationships free from exploitation, abuse and bullying;
managing emotions within relationships, and when relationships break down, with confidence, sensitivity and dignity;
managing conflict positively, recognising the value of difference;
cultivating humility, mercy and compassion, learning to forgive and be forgiven;
developing self-esteem and confidence, demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others;
building resilience and the ability to resist unwanted pressures, recognising the influence and impact of the media, internet and peer groups and so developing the ability to assess pressures and respond appropriately;
assessing risks and managing behaviours in order to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity.

To know and understand:

the Church's teaching on relationships and the nature and meaning of sexual love;
the Church's teaching on marriage and the importance of marriage and family life;
the centrality and importance of virtue in guiding human living and loving;
the physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty;
the facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation;

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; for example, their own sexual orientation, faith or culture 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 dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific relationships and sex curriculum.

ASSESSMENT OF RSE

Pupils will be assessed informally through opportunities for discussion and completion of tasks. The purpose of this will be for teachers to build on what the children know, their mis-conceptions, questions and attitudes. Assessments will be used to tailor the "Life to the Full" programme to meet the needs of the class.

PARENTS AND CARERS

We recognise that parents/carers are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children. Therefore the school will support parents/carers by providing material to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help them to find out more. Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning.

Parents will be informed through school newsletters and be encouraged to look at the programme, make comments and ask questions. They will be able to view samples of resources used by the school in the RSE programme in order that they will have full confidence in the school's RSE programme to meet their child's needs.

We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for the RSE curriculum to be followed. However we acknowledge that Parents continue to have the right to withdraw their children from Sex Education except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the headteachers. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning.

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 using the 'Life to the Full' Programme.

Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE. Knowing about facts and enabling young people to explore differing viewpoints is not the same as promoting behaviour and is not incompatible with our schools' 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.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHING THE PROGRAMME

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lies within the work of the Science, RE, PE, RSE, PSHE and online safety Leaders. 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 good, healthy, wholesome relationships as between staff, other adults and pupils. They will also be contributing to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.

EXTERNAL VISITORS

Our school may call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSE. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher led sessions. It is important that any external visitor is clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in school delivering a session. Any visitor must adhere to the code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Checklist for External Speakers to Schools'.

Health professionals should follow the school's policies, minimising the potential for disclosures or inappropriate comments using negotiated ground rules and distancing techniques as other teachers would. They will ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice.

OTHER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING 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 teachers (Executive Head and Heads of School)

The Head teachers take 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/RSE Co-Ordinator.

The leaders, with the head teachers, have 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. (They will be supported by the curriculum leader and the member of staff with responsibility for safeguarding).

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.

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, Behaviour policy, Safeguarding Policy etc)

Pupils with SEND 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.

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

The governors and teaching staff want to continue to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. An importance has always been placed on pupils being able to ask questions freely and be confident that their questions will be answered, and be sure that they will be free from bullying or harassment from other children.

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, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion.

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 tendentious or is of a personal nature. Teachers will be supported to understand how to answer questions which are posed which may be of a sensitive nature or may be very explicit and not suitable for general discussion for that age group.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE 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 well 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 a teacher suspects that a child or young person is a victim of or is at risk of abuse they are required to follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

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 PHSE and RSE Lead 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.

First implemented: April 2021

Revisited: June 2024

Next review: June 2026