



## **Relationships and Sex Education** **(RSE) Policy**

*Reviewed May 2022*

### 1. **AIMS**

- 1.1 To be a Catholic school where all members of the community live according to Gospel values and the principles and teachings of Mary Ward, promoting the virtues of freedom, sincerity, justice, truth and joy, to allow all members of the community to feel secure and able to work and live in an atmosphere of courtesy and respect.
- 1.2 The Governors seek to ensure that the values of Mary Ward are reflected in the planning and delivery of all policies. The principle values covered by this policy are:
  - **Freedom** – This policy aims to provide an environment where students will be encouraged to appreciate that through respectful relationships with others they will take charge of their own lives.
  - **Sincerity** – Mary Ward said “We should be such as we appear and appear such as we are.” This policy aims to encourage students to follow this instruction in all personal relationships.
- 1.3 To create a caring and stable environment, in which each person is respected as an individual with unique gifts, talents and ambitions, and is given the freedom and confidence to develop these.
- 1.4 We are committed to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. 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”<sup>2</sup> which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

### 2. **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- 2.1 In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their set out our rationale for and approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in the school. This policy has been adapted from the Catholic Education Service model.

### 3. **IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW OF POLICY**

- 3.1 This policy will be reviewed every year by the Head teacher, RSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and Staff.

### 4. **DISSEMINATION**

- 4.1 The policy will be given to members of the Governing Body, and teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the document will be published on the school’s web site.

## 5. **DEFINING RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION**

- 5.1 RSE is an integral part of the curriculum for all students. Students learn about spiritual, physical, moral and emotional development. RSE is about teaching factual knowledge about sex, sexuality and sexual health in a way that is fully understood and effectively retained by students. It provides an understanding of what it is to be in a caring, stable and mutually supportive relationship with another person and how to control and understand feelings that come with being in a relationship. RSE will outline the importance of marriage for family life and the raising of children as well as highlighting the role of marriage and other stable relationships as building blocks for community and society. RSE should give students the information they need to be safe and develop healthy and nurturing relationships.

## 6. **RATIONALE**

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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 and support will be provided to help pupils deal with different sets of values.

## 7. **OBJECTIVES**

- 7.1 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 and that of others;
- celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love;
- recognising the importance of marriage and family life, and
- fidelity in relationships.

- 7.2 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;

- being patient, delaying gratification and learning to recognise the appropriate stages in the development of relationships, and how to love chastely, and
- assessing risks and managing behaviours in order to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity.

### 7.3 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;
- how to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception, and
- how to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

## 8. **INCLUSION AND DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING**

- 8.1 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.

## 9. **EQUALITIES OBLIGATIONS**

- 9.1 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 children looked after.

## 10. **PARENTS AND CARERS**

- 10.1 We recognise that parents (and other carers who stand in their place) 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. 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.
- 10.2 Parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from some or all aspects of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Parents/carers who wish to withdraw their child are asked to notify the school by contacting the Headteacher. (Up until three terms before a child turns 16 they can themselves choose to receive sex education if they wish.)
- 10.3 The DfE states that "parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from Health Education or the relationships element of RSE because it is important that all children receive this content".
- 10.4 We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.

## 11. **BROAD CONTENT OF RSE**

- Families
- Respectful relationships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships

Our full programme will be devised to include coverage of all core topics.

## 12. **BALANCED CURRICULUM**

- 12.1 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 as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE (in secondary schools/academies relating to forced-marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion, the age of consent and legislation relating to equality). 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.

## 13. **RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHING THE PROGRAMME**

- 13.1 Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme will be taken by the relevant curriculum staff: this will normally include subject leaders for science, religious education, physical education, RSE and PSHE.
- 13.2 However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE programme. They will **aim to** 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.
- 13.3 **External Visitors:**
- 13.3.1 Our school will often 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.
- 13.3.2 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 our code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools'<sup>3</sup>.

## 14. **OTHER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING RSE**

### 14.1 **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 (from sex education only);
- establish a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used, and
- ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHE.

## 14.2 **Headteacher**

14.2.1 The Head teacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, Westminster Diocese and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

## 14.3 **PSHE/RSE Co-ordinator**

14.3.1 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.

## 14.4 **All Staff**

14.4.1 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 staff teaching RSE.

## 15. **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND CURRICULUM SUBJECTS**

15.1 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.

15.2 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.

## 16. **CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS**

16.1 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.

### 16.2 **Controversial or Sensitive issues**

16.2.1 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.

16.2.2 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.

## **17. SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE AT RISK**

17.1 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.

## **18. CONFIDENTIALITY AND ADVICE**

18.1 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.

18.2 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.

18.3 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 circumstance they would have to inform others, e.g., parents, head teacher.

## **19. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

19.1 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 every two years. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

## **References**

- 1 Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfE, 2019
- 2 Gravissimum Educationis 1
- 3 Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools, CES, Feb. 2011