



ST BEDE'S CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

Relationships and Sex Education Policy



'We commit ourselves to love, respect and serve one another as disciples of Jesus Christ'

Approved	January 2023
Next Review	January 2024

Introduction

In this policy, the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions about relationships and sex education (RSE). We set out our rationale for, and approach to relationships and sex education in the school.

As a result of the implementation of statutory RSE as of September 2020, the PSHCE coordinator, Ms Taylor and PSHCE SLT link, Mrs Jackson, have conducted a review on the current curriculum and delivery for RSE. In addition to this, the school has consulted with Judy Franklin, of the PSHCE North Lincolnshire Consortium, Chris Maher, Director of Standards at Our Lady Of Lourdes CMAT and TenTen 'Life to the Full' Education. Consultation with pupils and governors through sample delivery sessions and feedback has been acted upon.

This policy has been reviewed and updated in line with the recent updated from the Diocesan RSE toolkit (2021) and KCSIE policy (2021)

Implementation and Review of Policy

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

Dissemination

The policy will be given to all members of the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body. Copies of the document will be available to all parents through the school's website and available from the school reception. Details of the content of the RSE curriculum will also be published on the school's web site and more detailed information can be obtained via the TenTen website.

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"¹. 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 Secondary schools RSE should "give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure)."²

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

² Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 25

Statutory Curriculum Requirements

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. (There is also a separate requirement for maintained secondary schools to teach about HIV, AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. This does not apply to academies).

However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

Rational

‘I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL’

(Jn.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 of God the Father’s 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 a 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 (and the Welsh Assembly Government), 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.

Whilst the framework for RSE has evolved, we are mindful that the topics discussed are not new. The understanding of the RSE curriculum and the need for a ‘positive and prudent sex education to be imparted to children and adolescent’ ³ has been referenced in 2016 *Amoris Laetitia* and understood within the Bishops’ Conference in 2017, *Learning to Love*. This policy and the delivery of RSE attempts to give truth to what is imagined in these documents; understand the nature and

³ Second Vatican Council

gift of love and educate children on understanding relationships and sex, and how the two can be understood together.

Values and Virtues

Our programme enshrines Gospel 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. We recognise that Catholic Character education involves the distinct and explicit teaching of virtues to allow the flourishing of the whole person. As a result, the following virtues will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

Aim of RSE and the Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement commits us to 'love, respect and serve one another as disciples of Jesus Christ'. In practice this includes the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this growth. Furthermore, our school aims state that we will endeavour to raise pupils' self-esteem, help them to grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of all persons and develop caring and sensitive attitudes.

In partnership with parents, to provide children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education"⁴ which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

Objectives

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

- we have all been created by God and we are all loved by God;
- 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;
- fidelity in relationships.

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

⁴ *Gravissimum Educationis* 1

- 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;
- assessing risks and managing behaviours in order to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity.

To know and understand:

- we are all created and loved by God;
- 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;
- how to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

Outcomes

Inclusion and Differentiated Learning

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, faith or culture and is taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination, in accordance with the equality act. 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. (In looking at these questions, it is important to draw links to the school's inclusion policy). We will respect

pupils' unique starting points by providing a learning environment that is safe and encourages open questioning.

Equalities Obligations

The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school does 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. We will ensure equality by understanding the demographic of our pupils and incorporating how Catholic beliefs on RSE are not exclusive and are shared with other World religions. We will assess the needs of different pupils through our extensive pastoral support network to ensure their needs are met through the curriculum content.

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.

Programme/Resources

Appendices to this policy provide further information about the programme; these include the PSHCE schedule and the TenTen Life to the full programme.

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- experiential
- active
- spider diagram
- film & video
- group work
- values clarification

Students will be given a comment based report in RSE, through PSHCE annually, so parents are aware of the content covered during that academic year. Students will have two annual assessments per year under the PSHCE structure and it is possible that one of those will be within the RSE theme. In addition, staff will conduct informal assessment during lessons and will highlight any student who is struggling to the PSHCE lead or the safeguarding team.

Parents and Carers

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. Therefore, the school will support parents and carers by providing material to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help parents/carers to find out more. Parents/carers will be informed by letter or the Parent Bulletin 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 have been consulted during the first policy before this was ratified by governors. They will be consulted at every stage of the development of the RSE programme, as well as during the process of monitoring, review and evaluation. Our aim is that every parent and carer will have full confidence in the school's RSE programme to meet their child's needs.

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. We will communicate with parents/carers each year about the RSE curriculum and their right to withdraw via letter. Should parents/carers wish to withdraw their children, they are asked to notify the school by contacting the Head teacher in response to the written communication sent by the school. The PSHCE co-ordinator will speak with parents/carers to enter into a constructive dialogue, ensuring that the rationale for RSE is understood and the reasons for withdrawing are taken seriously. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning.

We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed. Please refer to the DfE guidance Page 17 for further details on the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw).

Balanced Curriculum

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues.

Pupils will also receive clear scientific information 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.

Responsibility for teaching the programme

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme sits with the PSHCE coordinator, Ms V Taylor and the PSHCE SLT link Mrs J Jackson. Delivery of this programme facilitated by staff members within school who have chosen to be part of the RSE team and

resources are provided by Ten Ten Life to the full, a well-respected Catholic educational organisation.

Miss Stapleton, subject leader of RE, is also the head of the RSE team within school. 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. All staff have completed training provided by CES on the new RSE framework.

External Visitors

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. It is important that any external visitor is clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in school delivering a session, and Ms Taylor (PSHCE Coordinator) will consult with visitors in advance of any sessions delivered. If they are a regular visitor to the school, a meeting will be held annually to discuss planning and feedback. In addition to this, all external visitors will be accompanied by a St Bede's member of staff and will be observed at least once during the academic year.

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

- approve 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 Catholic beliefs;
- ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children;
- establish a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used;
- ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHE.

Head teacher

The Head teacher, Mr R Hibbard, takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, the Diocesan Schools' Service and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

PSHCE/RSE Co-Ordinator

Ms V Taylor, the co-ordinator with the senior link for RSE, Mrs J Jackson, has a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will

provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to RSE and the provision of in-service training.

All Staff

RSE is a whole school issue. All teachers have a responsibility of care; as well as fostering academic progress they should actively contribute to the guardianship and guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of their pupils. Teachers will be expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSE. All staff have been made aware of this policy and what their roles and responsibilities are in relation to RSE.

Relationship to other policies and other 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 and safeguarding and child protection policy.

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. The Learning Support team will be consulted in advance of RSE being delivered to ensure the right TA support is in place if needed.

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

Children's Questions

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. They want to ensure that pupils can ask questions freely, be confident that their questions will be answered, and be sure that they will be free from bullying or harassment from other children and young people.

Controversial or Sensitive issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE. These may be matter of maturity, of personal involvement or experience of children, of disagreement with the official teaching of the Church, of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious or harmful activity. The governors believe that children are best educated, 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.

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 policies. 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., safeguarding and parents, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken where safe and appropriate to do so.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The PSHCE Co-ordinator, Ms V Taylor, alongside the SLT Link, Mrs J Jackson, will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils work during learning walks. The programme will be evaluated annually by means of questionnaires and discussions with all stakeholders including parents, students and staff. Evaluation of the programme will also take place after publication of the ALS Survey, once every three years. 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.