

St Mary's RC Primary Academy

Boston



Religious Sex Health Education

Policy

(RSHE)

Mission Statement

We love, we grow, we learn; walking with faith in the light of the Lord.

Date Adopted: November 2022
Date of Review: November 2025

Rights Respecting Articles

Article 3

The best interests of pupils must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for pupils.

Article 23

You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this convention, so that you can live a full life.

Article 28

All pupils have the right to a good primary education, which should be free.

Introduction

In this policy the Governors and Teachers, in partnership with pupils and their Parent/Carers, set out their intentions with regard to relationships and sex education (RSHE). We set out our rationale for and approach to relationships and sex education in the school.

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 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.”² This would include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe...³

Rationale

‘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 RSHE 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. RSHE, 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 relationships and sex education 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 RSHE 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.

Aim of RSHE

We believe that Sex and Relationship Education is an integral part of pupil's education. 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. It is in this context that we commit ourselves to "positive and prudent" sex and relationship education". It is characterised by a whole person, whole school, and developmental approach thus setting it firmly within our distinctively Christian vision of education.

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:

- 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:

- 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:

- 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.

Statutory Curriculum Requirements

We are required to teach those aspects of RSHE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. The reasons for our inclusion of RSHE go further.

Values and Virtues

Our 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, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

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 RSHE 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 RSHE. 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.

Equality and Inclusion

We will ensure RSHE 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.

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups. For some young people it is not culturally appropriate for them to be taught particular items in mixed groups. We will respond to parental requests and concerns.

We will ensure that all pupils receive sex and relationship education, and we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our pupils, taking specialist advice where necessary.

Lessons will also help pupils 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.

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.

Protected characteristics

Our curriculum is planned and delivered so that children develop age-appropriate knowledge and understanding during their time at the school. This allows them to understand protected characteristics. Life to the Full, gives a continuous, age-appropriate approach to the teaching of the subject of RSHE and protected characteristics.

In KS1, we look at family structures (particularly KS1, Module 2, Unit 2: Special People), Ten Ten provides guidance for on talking about different family structures.

In Lower KS2, we explore similarities and differences (LKS2 Module 1, Unit 2: We Don't Have To Be The Same) this deepens children's exploration of family and others in LKS2 Mod2 Unit 2: Family, Friend and Others.

In Upper KS2, we explore difference once again through the Paradise Street series, including discussion around 'two mums and two dads' etc.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for RSHE lays with the Head teacher and RSHE Co-ordinator, however all staff are involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of RSHE. 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 pupil's personal and social skills.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body are responsible for the following;

- Drawing up the RSHE policy, in consultation with Parent/Carers and Teachers.
- Ensure that the policy is available to Parents/Carers.
- 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 RSHE within PSHE.

Headteacher

The Headteacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, Parent/Carers, the Diocesan Schools' Service and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

PSHE/RSHE Co-ordinator

The co-ordinator, with the Headteacher, 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 RSHE and the provision of in-service training.

All Staff

RSHE 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 RSHE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSHE. 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.

Teaching strategies will include:

- Establishing ground rules
- Distancing techniques
- Discussion
- Project learning
- Reflection
- Experiential
- Active
- Mind mapping
- Film and video
- Group work
- Role-play
- Trigger drawings
- Values clarification

(See also 'Sex and Relationship Guidance '. DCSF 2000 and Welsh Assembly Government, Sex and Relationship Education in Schools, Circular 019/2010, Cardiff: Welsh Assembly, 2010 for more detail)

Parent/Carers

We recognise that Parent/Carers are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists Parents/Carers in educating their children. Therefore the school will support Parent/Carers by providing material to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help Parent/Carers to find out more.

Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSHE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning.

Parent/Carers must be consulted before this policy is ratified by the Governors. They will be consulted at every stage of the development of the RSHE programme, as well as during the process of monitoring, review and evaluation. They will be able to view the resources used by the school in the RSHE programme. Our aim is that, at the end of the consultation process, every parent and carer will have full confidence in the school's RSHE programme to meet their child's needs.

Parent/Carers 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 Parent/Carers wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the Headteacher. The school will provide support by providing material for Parent/Carers 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.

Provision / Programme

The three aspects of Relationship and Sex Education; 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.

Ten:Ten Programme

RSHE will be taught through the Ten:Ten programme 'Life to the full'. This programme has been approved by our diocese. Ten:Ten have entered into a partnership with the Catholic Education Service and the Department for Education to provide training for Teachers in Catholic schools on the subject of the new statutory curriculum.

The three modules that underpin 'Life to the full' are based on the model Catholic RSHE curriculum are:

- Created and loved by God
- Created to love others
- Created to live in community

The programme consists of units of work including music, prayer and work booklets. Each Unit has an end of unit assessment activity from which Teacher judgements can be made as to the level of attainment.

This RSHE 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 policies (for example, Anti-Bullying Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy etc). Life to the full programme will be supplemented by teachers to meet the non - statutory requirements of PSHE using PSHE Matters programme.

Journey in Love

This initiative has been welcomed by the Catholic Education Service (CES), who state clearly that, Catholic schools are also required to deliver RSHE in accordance with the teaching of the Church. RSHE is part of the mission of Catholic schools to educate the whole person. It should be carried out as part of the holistic education, which seeks to form as well as inform young people in preparation for adult life.

A Journey in Love offers opportunities to teach DFE guidance on Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education in age-appropriate ways. Catholic Education Service accentuates that any teaching about love and sexual relationships in a Catholic school must be rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching about what it is to be truly human in Christ, what it means to live well in relationship with others and be presented within a positive framework of Christian virtue.

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

The RSHE 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 biannually by means of questionnaires / response sheets / needs assessments given to pupils, and / or by discussion with pupils, staff and Parent/Carers. The results of the evaluation should be reported to these groups of interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. The Governing Body will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. The Governing Body remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

Relationship to other Policies / Initiatives

This RSHE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHE framework and thus contribute to the school's National Healthy School Standard. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is cross-referenced to the Child Protection and Safeguarding 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.

Guidelines

The governors recognise that RSHE can be a sensitive issue for all concerned and are concerned that Teachers' training and support needs are properly provided for. The Governing Body therefore require the school to provide such training and support to all those involved in the RSHE programme. This training will cover legislative requirements, Church teaching, the demands of this policy and the development of appropriate skills to deliver the RSHE programme.

Pupils will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSHE takes place. Effective RSHE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a child protection 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 pupil is a victim of or is at risk of abuse they should follow the school's child protection policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

Withdrawal

Parent/Carers have the right to withdraw their children from RSHE, with the exceptions of those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. However, we will remind Parent/Carers of the words of the late Cardinal Hume. He expressed some concerns about withdrawing pupils from sex education lessons. He wondered whether such action might damage the parent-child relationship in terms of confidence and trust, whether it could really inhibit the passing on of information within peer groups and "might well remove one possible means of correcting, or putting in perspective, the uncontrolled information circulating within peer groups." (Cardinal Hume in a speech given at Bradford). We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed. Parent/Carers will be able to examine the programme their children are following and provide additional preparation and information as they wish.

Pupil's Questions

The Governing Body want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSHE 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 pupils. Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for Teachers to answer during ordinary class time, e.g., where a pupil's questions hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature.

Controversial or Sensitive Issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSHE. These may be matter of maturity, of personal involvement or experience of pupils, of disagreement with the official teaching of the Church, of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious or harmful activity. The Governing Body believe that pupils are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSHE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between Teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion.

(See also 'Sex and Relationship Guidance'. DCSF 2000 and Welsh Assembly Government, Sex and Relationship Education in Schools, Circular 019/2010, Cardiff: Welsh Assembly, 2010 for more detail.

Confidentiality and Advice

All Governors, Teachers, support staff, Parent/Carers and pupils must be made aware of this policy, particularly as it relates to issues of advice and confidentiality.

All lessons, especially those in the RSHE 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.

Safeguarding Procedures

If a teacher has any concerns regarding the welfare of a particular child then that teacher will make a dated note of their worries and liaise with the nominated persons on the staff. Any information thus obtained will be regarded as strictly confidential and will be passed to staff on a need to know basis only. After consultation it is the decision of the Headteacher as to whether the information is forwarded to the relevant body.

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. Parent/Carers, Headteacher, but that the pupil(s) would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

If there is a suspicion of possible abuse Teachers will follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

External Visitors

Our school will often call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of health promotion, in particular RSHE within schools. It must however be noted that such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace Teacher led sessions. The delivery will also be in line with the Church's teaching.

Benefits of external visitors to RSHE:

- Bring a new perspective to a subject.
- Offer specialised knowledge, experience and resources.
- Make the topic less embarrassing because the visitor is a 'safe stranger'.
- Form a friendly link to the community and make local services more accessible.
- Add variety to the curriculum.
- Give support to Teachers.

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'.

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. For more information please see the School's Students and Volunteers Policy and the Visitors Policy.

References

1. Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) 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 (RSHE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 19
3. Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 25
4. Gravissimum Educationis 1
5. CES Checklist for External Speakers to Schools, 2016

Dissemination

The draft policy will be given to all members of the Governing Body, and all Teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the document will be available to all Parent/Carers through the school's website and a copy is available in the school office.

Details of the content of the RSHE curriculum will also be published on the school's website.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Headteacher, RSHE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and Staff.

Signed
Chair of Governors

Date