**Relationship & Sex Education (RSE) Policy**

**2017 - 2019**

First and foremost, St Catherine’s Primary School believes that RSE needs to be a highly personalised area of the curriculum. There will be a baseline of provision for all children, which is outlined below. However, children’s own varied and sometimes highly complex experiences of relationships, the varied way in which their bodies change and grow, and their own questions about boys, girls and sex can mean that a completely bespoke programme needs to be designed.

We encourage parents and carers to communicate their child’s questions and thoughts in relation to RSE with us so that we can best support their developing understanding in school.

**Definition of RSE**

Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) has been renamed as RSE: Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) to emphasise the relationships aspect of RSE. This was one of the recommendations from the Commons Education Committee (Feb 2015). Sex and Relationship Education is not just learning about growing up, changes and reproduction. It is also about enabling children to make and maintain relationships with others, to understand about human sexuality and to feel good about themselves and the choices they make. This involves helping children to gain knowledge, develop skills and form positive beliefs and attitudes.

1. Knowledge and Understanding including: emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up; puberty; reproduction and pregnancy; similarities and differences between males and females; parts of the human body including the male and female reproductive parts; gender stereotyping and discrimination; different families; different types of relationships; healthy and unhealthy relationships; and where to get help if needed

2. Personal and Social Skills including: talking and listening to others; managing emotions; making friends and managing friendships; forming and maintaining loving, caring and respectful relationships; developing self-respect and empathy for others; respecting the differences between people; resilience to cope with change; making responsible and safe decisions, including on line.

3. Attitudes and Values including feeling positive about growing up, particularly the importance of:

* respect, care and love, the value of family life, the importance of stable and loving relationships
* respect for rights and responsibilities in relationships
* acceptance of difference and diversity
* promoting gender equality

**RSE for our Catholic School**

A note in relation to the Catholic message of the sanctity of marriage for heterosexual couples and the message of acceptance for all loving, stable relationships including those non-married heterosexual couples and same sex partnerships:

“Catholic Schools… will develop a range of attitudes and activities that promote and support the dignity and worth of everyone.” (Catholic Schools, Children of Other Faiths and Community Cohesion: CES and Bishop’s Conference 2007 p.13.)

The commitment of the Catholic Church to interfaith dialogue… provides a further basis for young peoples’ contribution to peaceful social cohesion. (Joint pastoral letter on Catholic Education: Bishop’s Conference)

**Purpose of the Relationship and Sex Education Policy**

Producing an up to date RSE policy is the statutory responsibility of the governing body.

The purpose of the policy is to:

* Give information to staff, parents and carers, governors, pupils and outside visitors about the content, organisation and approach to teaching RSE
* Enable parents and carers to support their children in learning about RSE
* Give a clear statement on what the school aims to achieve from RSE, the values underpinning it and why it is important for primary school pupils
* Be clear about how we address RSE in our context as a Catholic school

Set out how the school meets legal requirements in respect of RSE, including:

(i) Duty to promote well-being (Children Act 2004)

(ii) Duty to prepare children for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life (Education Act 2006)

(iii) Ensure pupils learn about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and bringing up children (Learning and Skills Act 2006)

(iv) Protect pupils from unsuitable teaching and materials (Learning and Skills Act 2006)

(v) Teach statutory RSE elements in the Science National Curriculum

(vi) Have an up to date policy developed in consultation with pupils and parents (Education Act 1996)

(vii) Meet the school’s safeguarding obligations

(viii) Make the policy available to pupils and parents (Education Act 1996)

(ix) Right of parental withdrawal from all or part of RSE except those parts included in the national curriculum (Education Act 1996)

(x) Taken account of the DfE guidance on RSE (2000)

(xi) DfE expects that all state schools “…should make provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and that “RSE is an important part of PSHE” (DfE guidance on PSHE 2013)

(xii) Prevent discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups (Equality Act 2010)

**Why teach RSE at primary school?**

• It provides an opportunity to talk about feelings and relationships

• It promotes the skills necessary for effective communication and loving, caring, respectful and happy relationships

• It prepares children for the physical and emotional changes that will take place during puberty

• It helps develop positive attitudes, values and self-esteem and challenges negative attitudes and prejudices

• It helps make sense of misinformation in the media and from peers

• It protects children from sexual exploitation and inappropriate online content

• It is a statutory part of the science curriculum covering the biological aspects of RSE

**Values promoted through RSE**

Our RSE programme promotes the aims and values of our school which include:

* The sanctity of the Sacrament of Marriage; valuing family life and stable, loving and committed relationships
* Acceptance of same sex unions as also offering stable, loving and committed relationships
* Respect for self and others
* Commitment, trust and love within relationships
* Respect for rights and responsibilities in relationships
* Understanding diversity regarding religion, gender, culture and sexual orientation
* Working to reduce intolerance and discrimination based on sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, religion, and gender
* Acceptance of difference and diversity
* Promoting gender equality, challenge gender stereotypes and inequality
* Promoting equality in relationships
* **Aims for RSE**

To enable children to:

* Develop the confidence to talk, listen and think about feelings and relationships
* Make and maintain friendships
* Understand the importance of respect, responsibility, love and care in relationships
* Understand and respect different types of families, including families with same sex parents
* Develop positive attitudes about growing up
* Explore their own and other people’s attitudes and values
* Challenge and prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender
* Prevent sexist, sexual, homophobic and transphobic language and bullying
* Challenge gender stereotypes and inequality and promote equality and respect in relationships
* Know the correct biological names for the parts of the body, including the male and female reproductive parts
* Know and understand about emotional, social and physical changes during puberty
* Know and understand about reproduction
* Know about human sexuality
* Discuss their concerns and correct misunderstanding they may have gained from the media and peers
* Keep safe online and offline
* Recognise when something is risky or unsafe
* Know where are how to seek information and advice when they need help

**Content and Organisation of the Programme**

What language will be used when talking to children about RSE?

Often children are given ‘pet’ names or ‘baby’ names to describe their body parts.

These codes can create a sense of secrecy about these areas of their bodies. Also, when they get older, and the correct terminology is introduced, they find it embarrassing. This can make them uncomfortable talking about a ‘new subject’, with language that is also very strange to them.

At St Catherine’s, we wish to empower children to talk openly and comfortably about their bodies. Therefore, we will use the correct terminology for the body parts unique to boys and girls i.e. penis, vagina and breasts from the age of Reception. If children use their own terminology we will respond to them, but we will try and model the correct language to them e.g. Reception child: ‘That lady has boobies.’ Teacher: ‘Yes, she does. She has breasts.’ Reception child: ‘The ball hit me in my winky.’ Teacher: ‘And does your penis hurt now?’

In Year 1 Science, children are taught to name all parts of the body that they are less familiar with including: wrist, ankle, shoulder etc. As part of this teaching, they will be taught that most body parts are the same for boys and girls, but some are different; boys have a penis and girls have a vagina.

From then on, teachers will ask children to use the correct names if they are talking about those body parts in a Science Lesson. Our aim is that by the time children need to talk about puberty, these words won’t feel uncomfortable for them.

**Where is RSE taught?**

The relationship aspect of RSE is significantly developed through the children’s Religious Education Curriculum, where the theme of family is explored deeply in each year group.

In its wider sense, RSE will be taught through a planned programme in PSHE and Citizenship as well as in Science. This will ensure that it covers not only the statutory biological aspects but also the social and emotional aspects. It is taught, throughout the years, either as discrete topics/units or integrated into other topics, at a level appropriate to the needs and maturity of the pupils. There is time for discrete teaching topics in particular years e.g. body changes in relation to puberty in Year 5. We ensure that the same messages about being safe online are taught through RSE as well as in Computing.

**Who teaches RSE?**

RSE will be taught by the class teacher but sometimes health professionals or other visitors will help deliver RSE, such as the school nurse.

**How is RSE taught?**

* On the whole pupils are taught in mixed groups to ensure that boys and girls learn the same information. However, sometimes it is useful, particularly in Years 5 and 6, to include time when single sex groups can discuss issues with a teacher of the same gender. This is mostly applicable when they learn about body changes through puberty and about reproduction.
* Teachers set a group agreement or ground rules with pupils to ensure that an atmosphere is created where pupils feel able to ask questions, discuss concerns, talk about feelings and relationships but do not discuss or ask private information of each other or the teacher.
* We answer questions honestly and sensitively, appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. Some questions may not be answered immediately if the teacher feels they need to consult with the Headteacher and some questions may be more appropriately answered on a one-to-one basis, rather than with the whole class. In Key Stage 2 classes, we provide a question box so that pupils can anonymously ask question, which are then answered by the class teacher.
* Resources, such as a range of books on puberty, are chosen to ensure that they are appropriate to the age and maturity of pupils. They take into account equality of opportunity through their use of language, cultural attitudes, family make-up and images, including body image, avoiding stereotyping, racism and sexism.
* A member of staff, who is a parent, is always present to provide a parent’s perspective on information given. Two members of staff are present with the children, at all times, to deal with any Child Protection or other sensitive issues.

The RSE policy reflects and is line with our equal opportunities policy and the school ensures that the RSE teaching programme is an inclusive one and is appropriate and relevant to all pupils, including those with SEN and disabilities. Teachers ensure that the content, approach and use of inclusive language reflects the diversity of the school community and helps all pupils to feel valued and included, regardless of their gender, ability, disability, experiences and family background.

* Where needed, RSE is differentiated to meet the needs of pupils and specialist resources may be used to respond to their individual needs. In some cases, pupils have individual support or work in small groups with a TA or learning mentor.
* Teachers do not discuss details of their personal relationships with pupils.
* Teachers are sensitive to the issues of different types of relationships.

**Inclusion**

Promoting inclusion and reducing discrimination are part of RSE throughout the school and reflect our equality policy. When teaching about relationships and families, we also discuss same sex relationships. In Year 5 and 6, questions about different types of relationships, including: lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans relationships may arise and will be dealt with in an inclusive manner, while reinforcing Catholic views on the sanctity of marriage.

Homophobic and transphobic references and homophobic and transphobic actions and bullying are not tolerated in school and are challenged and dealt with as part of our commitment to promoting inclusion, gender equality and preventing bullying.

**Confidentiality, safeguarding and child protection**

Although RSE is not about personal disclosures and personal issues, it is possible that a pupil may disclose personal information. Staff understand that they cannot promise pupils absolute confidentiality and pupils know this too.

If teachers are concerned in any way that a pupil is at risk of sexual or any other kind of abuse, they will talk to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and follow the school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures. If a pupil discloses to a teacher that they are sexually active, or are considering sexual activity, then this would be viewed as a child protection issue.

**Monitoring and evaluating RSE**

The SLT monitor teachers’ planning to ensure RSE is being taught.

**Working with Parents/Carers and Child Withdrawal Procedures**

We place the utmost importance on sharing responsibility with parents and carers for their children’s education. We do our best to find out about cultural views, which may affect the RSE curriculum and will try to balance parental views with our commitment to comprehensive RSE and equality. If a parent/carer has concerns about the sex education aspects of the curriculum, we would ask that they make an appointment to discuss the matter with the SLT. Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from RSE, apart from the statutory national curriculum. This means that parents and carers cannot withdraw their children from RSE aspects of the science national curriculum, for e.g. the changes that occur during puberty, which is taught in Year 5.

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the RSE curriculum they must arrange a meeting with a member of the SLT, who will talk through their concerns and discuss the benefits of school RSE. If they decide to withdraw their child, work will be provided to do in another class. We will offer packs of the teaching materials if parents wish to use this with their children at home.

Even when a child has been withdrawn from RSE lessons, if the child should ask questions at other times, these questions would be answered honestly by staff.

**Approved by: Governing Body**

**Approved Date: October 2017**

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