



## Relationships and Sex Education Policy 2022-2024

In this policy the Governing Board and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their rationale for, and approach to, relationships and sex education (RSE) in the school.

In drafting this policy, the Governing Board has reviewed the RSE curriculum content with staff, and has undertaken a consultation with parents, staff and governors.

### **Implementation and Review of Policy**

Following approval by the Governing Board, implementation of the policy will take place in the autumn term 2022.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Head teacher, RSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Board and Staff. The next review date is September 2024.

### **Dissemination**

The policy will be given to all members of the Governing Board, and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the document will be available to all parents through the school's web site and a copy is available in the school office. Details of the content of the RSE curriculum will also be published on the school's web site.

### **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"<sup>1</sup>. 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."<sup>2</sup> This would include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

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<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>2</sup> Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 19



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### Rationale

*'I have come that you might have life and have it to the full' (Jn. 10.10)*

We are involved in relationships, sex and health 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 (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.

### 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 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 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.

*Be who God created you to be and you will set the world on fire*



### Aim of RSE and the Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement commits us 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. 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:

In partnership with parents, to provide children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education"<sup>3</sup> 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.

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<sup>3</sup> *Gravissimum Educationis* 1



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### 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.

### 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.

Where needed, specialist resources may be used to respond to pupils' individual needs. In some cases, pupils have individual support or work in small groups with a TA or learning mentor.

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).

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.

### Equalities Obligations

The Governing Board has 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.

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### **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**

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- experiential
- active
- brainstorming
- film & video
- group work
- role-play
- trigger drawings
- values clarification

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 questions, which are then answered by the class teacher.



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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.

### **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.

### **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 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.

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Parents/carers must be consulted before this policy is ratified by the Governing Board. 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. We will 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 Senior Leadership Team.

Parents/carers will be able to view the resources used by the school in the RSE programme. Our aim is that, at the end of the consultation process, 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. This means that parents and carers cannot withdraw their children from RSE aspects of the science national curriculum, e.g. for the changes that occur during puberty which are 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.

We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed. 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.

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. 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 lays with the class teacher.

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 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 responsibilities whilst they are in school delivering a session. Any visitor must adhere to our code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Checklist for External Speakers to Schools'<sup>4</sup>.

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**

### **Governing Board**

- draws up the RSE policy, in consultation with parents and teachers;
- ensures that the policy is available to parents;
- ensures that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g. SEN, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs;
- ensures that parents know of their right to withdraw their children;
- establishes a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used.

### **Head teacher**

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

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<sup>4</sup> CES Checklist for External Speakers to Schools, 2016





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### **PSHE/RSE Co-Ordinator**

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. *(They may be supported by the curriculum deputy and the member of staff with responsibility for child protection).*

### **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, Bullying policy, Safeguarding Policy, etc.)

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 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.

### **Children's Questions**

The Governing Board wants to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. It wants 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.



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### **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 Governing Board believes 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.

(See also Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, Managing difficult questions, Page 23 for more detail.)

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**

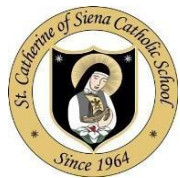
Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place. Effective RSE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue. Teachers will need to be aware 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 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 or head teacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.



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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.

Teachers do not discuss details of their personal relationships with pupils.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The RSE Co-ordinator and Senior Leadership Team 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. The Governing Board will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. The Governing Board remains ultimately responsible for the policy.



VERITAS

*Be who God created you to be and you will set the world on fire*