



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Policy on Relationship and Sex Education

(RSE) for Catholic Schools [February 2021]

“I have come that you might have life and have it to the full’ John 10:10

Foreword from Bishop Richard Moth



“The Church as a mother is under an obligation to provide for its children an education by virtue of which their whole lives may be inspired by the spirit of Christ.”¹

These words, from Decree of the Second Vatican Council on Education, speak of the motivation for our Catholic schools. Our schools are places where the relationship with Christ, to which all are called, enables those we educate to take their place in the Church and Society conscious of their dignity as children of God.

Our schools provide the “principal means of helping parents to fulfil their role in education.”² In entrusting their children to our schools, parents provide them with the best possible start in life, grounded in the deepening of their faith through prayer and the recognition of the presence of God in all things.

Our belief in the unique dignity of the human person as made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in our Catholic schools. To this end, RSE is rooted in the Catholic Church’s teaching of the human person and firmly embedded in the Religious Education framework as it is concerned primarily with nurturing the human wholeness of our pupils.

I am pleased to commend this RSE policy to you and am confident you will find it both invaluable and reassuring as you prepare for the new academic year.

With every Blessing,

Richard

St Mary's School is a welcoming Catholic Community.

A place where we come to ...

PRAY

We deepen our love for Jesus through personal prayer, reflection and collective worship.

LOVE

Knowing that God loves us, we nurture a positive sense of self and we serve the needs of others in a changing and challenging world.



LEARN

We support and encourage one another to do our best in all things. We celebrate one another's strengths, talents and abilities.

ENJOY

By learning to respect ourselves and others, we can fully enjoy living a life of opportunities and realise our potential.

¹ VATICAN II, Declaration *Gravissimum Educationis* on Christian Education, n.3. (GE)

² Code of Canon Law, c. 796§1.

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.

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

Statutory Curriculum Requirements

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE, which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. However the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

Rationale

This policy has been written in accordance with our school Mission Statement (above). St Mary’s is a successful Catholic school.

We celebrate diversity and welcome families from all faiths and backgrounds who are happy to support our ethos. We aim at all times to live out our mission. We hold the needs of the whole child at the heart of all that we do. Academic achievement is very important to us but not in isolation and as such we nurture and develop the spiritual, sporting, musical, social, moral and emotional skills and talents in all children too.

We aim to equip our children for 21st century learning and life. We encourage resilience, the ability to reflect and adapt to the changing needs of the modern world, to think creatively, to work both independently and collaboratively as part of a team and to act responsibly as global citizens. We acknowledge that Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship, as well as Relationship and Sex Education (RSE), are all underpinned by a theology of relationship and are all encompassed in the title ‘Relationships and Sex Education’ (RSE).

Our belief in the unique dignity of the human person as made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in our Catholic school. Our approach to RSE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church’s teaching of the human person and is presented positively and prudently.

Stemming from this vision of what it means to be human, we seek to educate the whole child: spiritually, intellectually, morally, emotionally, psychologically, and physically towards our understanding of Christian maturity.

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 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, 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.

Teaching high quality RSE is essential in creating an inclusive ethos and is central to developing healthy relationships and behaviours where children are able to assess and manage risk. It is essential that RSE is communicated to and taught in conjunction with the parents/carers of our pupils, as we recognise that parents/carers are the natural primary educators of their children and they are the experts on the development of their own children. The views of all parents/carers are actively sought, allowing their voice to be heard and responded to. ‘For the working relationship between school and families to be realised, views and opinions that are not the same as those held in school should be discussed so that any perceived barriers are overcome.’ (Good practice example - Cale Green Primary School Ofsted Feb 2015)

The Governing Body of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, believes that Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is an essential part of a holistic education since its focus is the individual, uniquely created by God in His own image. Through RSE, children come to understand more about themselves, others and the beauty of Creation.

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. (Appendix A)

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" 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 encourage pupils' growth in self-respect, acknowledging we are all created in the image and likeness of God.
- To help pupils develop an understanding that love is the central basis of relationships.
- To help pupils to understand the nature of relationships and to encourage them to reflect on their own relationships and respect similarities and differences between people.
- To develop pupils' confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships.
- To help pupils acquire the skills necessary to develop and sustain relationships.
- To offer sex education supported by the school's wider curriculum for personal, social and health education.
- To be able to know their body, learn the names of the main body parts and say which part of their body is associated with each sense. Include the introduction of genitals and describe the changes as humans develop to old age.
- To ensure that pupils are prepared for puberty and the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences that adult life will bring.
- To ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, can protect themselves and ask for help and support when needed.
- To help pupils to develop a healthier, safer lifestyle.
- To prepare pupils to play an active role as citizens and to understand the Catholic vision of what it means to be citizens of the Kingdom/reign of God

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. 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.

Equalities Obligations

The Governor Board 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.

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 education curriculum.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School has agreed to follow the programme 'A Journey in Love' as recommended by the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton.

'A Journey in Love' is a resource created by Sister Jude Groden of BRES. It is the recommended programme of study for Catholic schools for Sex and Relationship Education, and has been written as a progressive scheme of work that supports the Religious Education, PSHE and Science curricula taught within the school. The central message of the Christian faith is love. The central message of our RSE teaching is love. (Appendix B)

Delivery of RSE

We intend that the school's RSE shall be delivered with a cross curricular and integrated approach and embedded in the wider context of the school's Education for Personal Relationships (EPR) programme, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Citizenship, Religious Education programme (Come & See), PSHE Association

Our programme will cover:

- Families and the people of who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe.

All pupils will be taught the significant aspects of RSE that remain as statutory elements of the National Curriculum for Science. Parents are **unable** to withdraw pupils from these statutory sessions.

During teaching we will ensure differentiation and inclusion and that RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils, respect pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances e.g. sexual orientation, faith and culture.

The Governor Board have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all pupils, in particular those protected characteristics listed under the Equalities Act 2010.

Key Stage 1 (5-7) Science

Statutory

- identify, name, draw and label the basic parts of the human body and say which part of the body is associated with each sense.
- notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults
- find out about and describe the basic needs of animals, including humans, for survival (water, food and air)
- describe the importance for humans of exercise, eating the right amounts of different types of food, and hygiene.

Notes and Guidance (non-statutory)

- The focus at this stage should be on questions that help pupils to recognise growth; they should not be expected to understand how reproduction occurs. The following examples might be used: egg, chick, chicken; egg, caterpillar, pupa, butterfly; spawn, tadpole, frog; lamb, sheep. Growing into adults can include reference to baby, toddler, child, teenager and adult.
- Pupils might work scientifically by: observing, through video or first-hand observation and measurement, how different animals, including humans, grow; asking questions about what things animals need for survival and what humans need to stay healthy; and suggesting ways to find answers to their questions.

Key Stage 2 (7 – 11)

Statutory

- Describe the changes as humans develop to old age.

Notes and Guidance (non-statutory)

- Pupils should draw a timeline to indicate stages in the growth and development of humans. They should learn about the changes experienced in puberty.
- Pupils could work scientifically by researching the gestation periods of other animals and comparing them with humans; by

finding out and recording the length and mass of a baby as it grows.

Statutory

- Recognise that living things produce offspring of the same kind, but normally offspring vary and are not identical to their parents.

Notes and Guidance (non-statutory)

- They should be introduced to the idea that characteristics are passed from parents to their offspring, for instance by considering different breeds of dogs, and what happens when, for example, Labradors are crossed with Poodles.

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- experiential
- mind mapping
- film & video
- group work
- role-play

Assessment and Recording

A record of each session is kept in each teacher's planning for the delivery of RSE. The programme will be assessed, monitored and evaluated by the RSE Coordinator in accordance with the school's monitoring and evaluation policy. Pupils are given the opportunity for self-evaluation at an age appropriate level.

Parent 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.

Parents must be consulted before this policy is ratified by the 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. They 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.

How parents can support their children:

- by talking with your child at home,
- by listening to any concerns,
- by reassuring your child that you are there if they need to talk about anything at all

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. Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the headteacher.

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).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf

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 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 supported by RSE Leader and the Senior Leadership team.

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 responsibility 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'. 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

- draw up the RSE policy, in consultation with parents and teachers
- ensure that the policy is available to parents
- ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g., SEN, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs
- ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children
- 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

Headteacher

The Headteacher 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.

PSHE/RSE Leader

The PSHE/RSE Lead 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.

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, Anti-bullying policy, 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.

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

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

St Mary's School wants to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. We 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 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, head teacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken

MONITORING AND EVALAUTION

The RSE Leader will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils work at regular intervals. The programme will be evaluated every two years by means of monitoring by the RSE leader and SLT, assessments 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 Governor Board of St Mary's Catholic School will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. The Governor Board remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

Dissemination

The draft policy will be given to all members of the Governors of St Mary's, and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the ratified document will then be available to all parents. A copy is available in the school office and on the school website.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be monitored every two years by the RSE Leader and reviewed by the Governor Board. Parents/carers will be consulted with, if any changes or adaptations are proposed.

The Governors of St Mary’s Catholic Primary School has formally adopted this policy for RSE. It will be reviewed by the Governors and Headteacher in conjunction with all staff on the date below.

Signed **Chair of Governors**

Signed **Headteacher**

Date

Date for Review: Spring 2023

APPENDIX A

By the end of Primary School

Families and people who care for me	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability. the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives. that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care. that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up. that marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong. how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.
Caring Friendships	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends. the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties. that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right. how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.
Respectful Relationships	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs. practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships. the conventions of courtesy and manners. the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority. about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help. what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive. the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.
Online Relationships	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not. that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous. the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them. how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. how information and data is shared and used online.
Being Safe	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context). about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe. that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact. how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know. how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult. how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard. how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so. where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

Appendix B

'Journey in Love'

Each year group is taught at an appropriate level for their understanding and the whole theme is based on Love of God and our uniqueness. There are four areas of development which include physical, social, emotional and spiritual for each year group. Many of the aspects are already within our RE and Science curriculum, and the themes include activities, reflections and prayers.

The learning objectives are as follows:-

Reception – The wonder of being special and unique

Year 1 – We meet God's love in our family

Year 2 – We meet God's love in the community

Year 3 – How we live in love

Year 4 – God loves us in our differences

Year 5 – God loves us in our changing and developing

Year 6 – The wonder of God's love in creating new life