

**St Mary’s Relationships and Sex Education Policy**

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| Author/s: | PSHE Lead, Headteacher |
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St Mary’s Catholic Primary School

**POLICY FOR RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION**

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

### Consultation that has taken place with:

* pupil focus groups / school council
* review of RSHE curriculum content with staff and pupils
* parents
* school governors

### Dissemination

The draft policy has been 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 parents through the school’s website. Hard copies are available upon request.

## **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 reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and 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 RSHE which are statutory parts of the National Curriculum in Science and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education as well as the government documentation of August 2022 for Relationship and Sex Education curriculum requirements.

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

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. Because 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 (and the Welsh Assembly Government) RSHE will be firmly embedded alongside the PSHEE 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. It will also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

**VALUES AND VIRTUES**

Our programme (provided by TenTen) 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.

## **AIM OF RSHE 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 RSHE is an integral part of this education. Under our Christian mission statement of ‘love one another’ we 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.

### CURRICULUM COVERAGE:

### Families and people who care for me

### • 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

### • 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

### • 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 \* (Marriage in England and Wales is available to both opposite sex and same sex couples. The Marriage and Civil Partnership Act 2022 extended marriage to same sex couples in England and Wales for persons over 18 years old. The ceremony through which a couple get married may be civil or religious)

### • 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

### • the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.

### Online relationships

### • 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

### • 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.

### DfE guidance ‘Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education’ states ‘it is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils’ ongoing emotional and physical development effectively.’ It recommends therefore that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. We use TenTen 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.

### • 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.

### Mental wellbeing

### • that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.

### • that there is a normal range of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations.

### • how to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others’ feelings.

### • how to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate.

### • Changing adolescent body

### • key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes.

### • about menstrual wellbeing including the key facts about the menstrual cycle

### The Church’s Teaching

* 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 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. 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).

## **EQUALITIES OBLIGATIONS**

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.

**BROAD CONTENT OF RSHE**

Three aspects of RSHE - 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.

The delivery of our programme will cover…

## **PROGRAMME / RESOURCES**

Appendices to this policy provide further information about the programme and resources for suggested use.

Teaching strategies will include:

* establishing ground rules
* discussion
* project learning
* reflection
* experiential
* active
* film & video
* group work
* role-play
* values clarification

RSHE will be teacher assessed and used for the purpose of informing future learning and for addressing any misconceptions, gaps within learning and understanding, or highlighting and targeting areas that are particularly poignant to the pupils and local community at any given point.

## **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 information to help parents/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.

Parents 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.

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. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning.

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

## **BALANCED CURRICULUM**

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

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 Mrs Griffiths, Mrs Lambie and Mr. MorGan

However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSHE 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 occasionally call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSHE. 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.

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.

**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 8 CES A Model Policy for Relationships and Sex Education 2016 Revised 2020 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 EVALUATION**

The RSE 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 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. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

**PSHE/RSHE 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 RSHE 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

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.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND CURRICULUM SUBJECTS**

This RSHE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHEE 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.

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

## **CHILDREN’S QUESTIONS**

The governors 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 children and young people.

### SENSITIVE OR CONTROVERSIAL 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 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 RSHE 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**

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