



*'Growing, loving and learning in the arms of Mary'*

**St. Mary's Catholic Primary School**

## **RSE Policy**

**(Relationships & Sex Education)**

## **Defining Relationships & 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. 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**

*‘I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL’ (Jn.10.10)*

We are involved in relationships and sex education precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. The belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in a Catholic school. Our approach to 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.

## **Aims and Objectives**

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” which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

Within our Relationship Education we teach our pupils about:

- looking after and maintaining a healthy body;
- respecting their bodies;
- building positive relationships with others, involving trust and respect;
- respecting the views of other people.
- being unique and celebrating the differences between us

- families, including our role in God's family, and how families can be different
- communities and our role within them
- 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 free of exploitation, abuse and bullying;
- managing emotions within relationships
- 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.

Within our Sex Education we teach our pupils about:

- respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others;
- male and female body parts and their various functions
- the development of the baby in the womb
- the internal and external changes which happen in puberty
- sexual development as a natural part of human growth
- the purpose of the menstrual cycle
- how human life is conceived
- male and female reproductive organs

In the Science curriculum the pupils at our school learn:

- That animals, including humans, move, feed, grow, use their senses and reproduce;
- That humans and animals can produce offspring and these grow into adults;
- Describe the basic needs of animals, including humans, for survival;
- Describe the importance of humans for exercise, eating the right amounts of different types of food and hygiene;
- Describe the changes as humans develop to old age including puberty
- To recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others and treat others with sensitivity

It is vital 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;

### **Inclusion and SEND**

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. (In looking at these questions, it is important to draw links to the school's inclusion/behaviour policy). Pupils with SEND 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.

### **Equalities Obligation**

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.

## **Relationship and Sex Education Curriculum**

We teach about the uniqueness of the human being and relationships through different aspects of the curriculum. While we carry out the main relationship education in our PSHE curriculum, we also cover relationships in other areas of the curriculum. In particular, Science, PE and RE, which we believe contribute significantly to children's knowledge and understanding of their own bodies and how they are changing and developing. We always encourage our pupils to voice their opinions and discuss any issues they may have with other pupils and adults in the room.

The *"Come and See"* Religious Education Programme for Primary Schools is used in the school to support relationship education alongside our broad and balanced PHSE & Values curriculum.

The Relationships and Sex Education curriculum will follow the model scheme of work developed by the CES adapted where necessary to reflect the specific needs of the school. We use a relationship education programme called *'Life to the Full'* with Nursery to Year 6 pupils. This is a fully-resourced curriculum scheme of work in Relationships and Health Education (RHE) for Catholic primary schools. It is approved by the Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle and Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust. The entire teaching is underpinned with a Christian faith understanding that our deepest identity is as a child of God – created, chosen and loved by God. The programme is fully inclusive of all pupils and their families.

## **Teaching and Learning**

Class teachers are responsible for the teaching and learning of Relationships and Sex Education supported by the RE and PSHE Lead. Whilst our PHSE, Values and RE curriculums run throughout the school year, our aim is to teach the specific elements of Relationships and Sex Education during our 'Healthy Week'. Teaching strategies will include establishing ground rules, discussion, reflection, active learning, brainstorming, film & video and group work.

## **The role of parents**

We recognise that parents have the prime responsibility for teaching RSE to their children. As a school we work in partnership with parents to support them in their responsibility to teach their children about Relationships and Sex Education:

- Inform parents about the school's Relationship and Sex Education policy and practice;
- Provide opportunities for parents to view materials and ask questions
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the relationship education of their child;
- Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy, or about the arrangements for relationship education in the school;
- Inform parents about the best practice known with regard to relationship education, so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers are giving to children at home.

We believe that, through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing bodies and their increasing responsibilities. We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the sex education element of the programme we teach in our school. If a parent wishes their child to be withdrawn from sex education lessons, they should discuss this with the headteacher and make it clear which aspects of the lessons they do not wish their child to participate in. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning. Children cannot be withdrawn from those aspects of the curriculum covered by the Relationships Programme or the Science National Curriculum.

## **Other Roles and Responsibilities regarding RSE**

### **Governors will:**

- Ensure that the RSE 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 will:**

- take overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the governing body, parents, the Diocesan Department for Education and the local authority, also appropriate agencies.

### **PSHE/RSE Lead will:**

- support 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.

### **Confidentiality**

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. 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. Teachers should explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance. If a child refers to being involved (or being likely to be involved in) sexual activity, then the teacher will take the reference seriously and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they have been victims of other forms of abuse. They will not try to investigate, but will immediately inform DSL/DDS as noted in Child Protection Policy.

### **Controversial or Sensitive issues**

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE. These may be a 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.

### **Assessment, Monitoring and Review**

Relationship education has three main elements:

- Attitudes and values;
- Personal and social skills;
- Knowledge and understanding.

RSE is monitored, evaluated and assessed as part of the school curriculum. Class teachers will be responsible for assessing children during their learning and evidence of taught RSE and PSHE will be recorded in pupils' books when teaching the 'Life to the Full' scheme.

**RSE Lead** – Gemma Smith

**RSE Governor** – Siobhan Carton