



Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Defining Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)

Following guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales, Relationship and Sex Education will be firmly embedded in the Personal, Social and Health Education framework. This is because 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 both understood and appreciated.

The DfE guidance defines RSE as “Lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development”. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage and family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care.

Rationale

“I have come that you might have life and have it to the full.”

(John 10.10)

We are involved in relationship 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 Holy Spirit in communion, united in a 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 is seen as God’s gift, reflect God’s beauty, and share in the divine creativity. Every human life has an intrinsic and absolute value being created by God and in his image. This value derives from the simple fact of existing and is not dependent on an individual’s age, abilities, social acceptability or any other characteristic. Self-respect and respect for each other must underline all human relationships.

Statutory Curriculum Requirements

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science.

Aims of Relationship and Sex Education

Our programme enshrines Catholic Values relating to the importance of stable, loving 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 of the human body.

To offer all pupils a planned programme of education about human development, relationships, sexuality and family life, that is developmental and appropriate to the age and maturity of the child.

Objectives of RSE:

To develop the following attitudes and virtues:

- Respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others.
- Responsibility for their own actions and recognition of the impact of these on others.
- 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.
- 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 of the media, internet and peer groups to assess pressures and be able to respond appropriately.

To know and understand:

- The Catholic Churches teaching on relationships.
- The Catholic Churches teaching on Marriage and the importance of marriage and family life.
- The physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty.
- The facts about human reproduction.

Inclusion and differentiated learning

We will ensure that RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils. It will respect all abilities including those of special educational needs and levels of maturity. Lessons will also support children to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying, cyber-bullying and also aggressive behaviours. Children will also be made aware of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help.

Pupils with particular difficulties whether of a physical or intellectual nature will receive appropriately differentiated support in order for them to achieve mature knowledge, understanding and skills. Teaching methods will be adapted to meet the varying needs of this group of pupils.

The Broad Content of RSE

They will be taught in an inter-related way: whole school, cross curricular and specific relationship and sex education programme (RSE).

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with the Catholic Churches teaching, we will ensure that all pupils are offered a balanced programme. This programme will offer a range of viewpoints on issues and they will receive clear scientific information. We will ensure that all of our pupils have access to the learning they need in order to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.

All teaching 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 and be contributing to the development of pupil's personal and social skills.

Reception and Key Stage 1

Pupils will consider self-esteem, promoting good behaviour, caring for one another, countering gender stereotyping, promoting good personal hygiene. These principles will permeate all aspects of the curriculum but more specifically will be addressed through elements of the Religious Education and the Science Curriculum.

Key Stage 2 - Years 3 and 4

In Years 3 and 4, pupils will build upon their understanding of self-esteem, relationships, social pressures, media pressures through group discussion, and circle time. Human growth and development will primarily be addressed through the Science curriculum.

Years 5 and 6

Children in years 5 and 6 will follow the Diocesan recommended scheme 'Life to the Full'.

The programme consists of a series of discussions, circle-time, and video clips, which will be introduced within a cohesive programme planned and delivered by the class teacher. Parents and the Academy Committee will be given an opportunity to view the materials to be included in the programme and their comments and views will be valued. Group discussion is a crucial element of this programme. Factual information sought, will be answered accurately, always using correct terminology. It is important that pupils are informed accurately about their physical development and what the Church teaches. The material is rooted in a Catholic understanding of the human person and an appreciation that authentic human love is much more than sexual expression. For the human person is made in the image and likeness of God.

To this end, the 'Life to the Full' programme aims to help:

- Pupils' understanding of their physical and emotional development.
- Promote ways in which young people can examine contemporary stereotypes of masculine and feminine behaviour and assume responsibility for their actions.

Boys and girls will be taught in the same groups but there will be opportunities for separate discussions as required. From the very beginning, the class teacher will establish ground rules with the class. This is so that all children will feel secure in exploring this area of the curriculum. A calm atmosphere within the classroom will be maintained so that children can learn about themselves, listen to each other and examine what the future may hold for them.

Resources from 'Life to the Full' are readily available to teaching staff. There will be input too later during the summer term from visiting professionals such as the school nurse who will have separate discussions as appropriate. Teachers will handle with sensitivity any explicit or difficult questions. They need not be answered directly and can be answered individually later.

All teaching in relation to personal responsibility and the dignity of the individual, will be encompassed within the moral framework and teaching of the Catholic Church. We acknowledge the right of parents to withdraw their children from any aspects of the teaching programme except those covered by the National Curriculum Science orders. Should Parents wish to withdraw their children, they are asked to notify the school by contacting the Principal. However, we believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.

Equal Opportunities

The Academy Committee has wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the very best for all of the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender identity, religion or whether they are looked after children.

Parents and Carers

Parents must be consulted before this policy is ratified by Members of the Local Academy Committee. 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.

We recognise those 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. Parents will be notified 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.

Principal

The Principal takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Academy Committee, parents, the Diocesan School's Service, the Local Education Authority and appropriate agencies.

RE Co-ordinator

The RE Co-ordinator along with the Principal 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.

Teaching 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. All teachers will be expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic ethos of the school and have been included in the development of this policy and all staff are made aware of this policy and how it relates to them.

Controversial or sensitive issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the area 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, or illegal activity or other dubious or harmful activity. The Academy Committee believes that children are best educated, protected from harm or 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 create a supportive climate for discussion.

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 fully aware that they are required to follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The RE Co-ordinator will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of the pupils work at regular intervals as part of their monitoring.

This will be shared with the Principal and reviewed by the Academy Committee.

Review

Dated: March 2023

To be Reviewed: March 2025, or earlier if required