

# English Martyrs' Catholic School



## Relationships and Sex Education Policy

*English Martyrs, as a community centred in Christ, strives to develop the talents of each person.*

*'May they all be one.'*

Approved/reviewed by Governors:	
January 2026	
Date of next review	January 2027

### Introduction and Rationale

English Martyrs' Catholic School recognises the intrinsic worth and dignity of each and every human being made in the image of God. The school seeks to develop the character and attributes of each person so that they can appreciate their own worth dignity and talents and build right relationships with others in pursuit of the common good. We promote delight in the unique set of talents and gifts that each individual has received from God and we seek to foster a warm, inclusive and nurturing culture in which every student is able to flourish and where relationships between all members of the community are constructive and affirming. We champion fundamental values of self-expression, freedom and equality and embrace and celebrate God's creation in all its diversity. Students are encouraged to develop a strong sense that 'though we are many, we are one body'. (*Romans 12: 5*)

It is our mission to develop each person holistically. As such the school endeavours to nurture the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual development of each student as they embark on their own unique and special journey with God lived and reverenced in their interactions with others in the whole variety of human expressions, including physical love. As St Irenaeus put it: 'The glory of God is the human person, fully alive'.

### Formulation and Revision of this Policy

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with students 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 as well as ensuring that the school complies fully with national legislation in this area.

Consultation which has taken place includes:

- Student focus groups in school and the Sixth Form Leadership Team
- Questionnaires to parents / carers
- A meetings for parents and carers including parents of students who are SEND
- Review of RSE curriculum content with staff
- Consultation with wider school community e.g. school nurse
- Consultation with school governors and the CMAT

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

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Principal, RSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and Staff.

This policy operates in conjunction with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)
- Equality Act 2010 and schools
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance)
- Alternative Provision (statutory guidance)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (advice for schools)
- The school's Student Behaviour Policy
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## **Defining Relationship and Sex Education**

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. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health.”

It is about the development of the student's knowledge and understanding of him or herself 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. The DFE identifies three main elements: “attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding”.

We hold this definition to be consistent with our values and ethos as a school community.

## **Statutory Curriculum Requirements**

We note that as an academy we are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. In addition we undertake to fulfil the duty on maintained secondary schools to teach about HIV, AIDS and sexually transmitted infections.

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

‘I have come that you might have life and have it to the full’ (*John 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, RSE and PSHE will be firmly embedded across the curriculum as they are concerned with nurturing human wholeness and are integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of students. 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 students have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from and support will be provided to help students deal with different sets of values.

## **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.

## **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 students' 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 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;
- An unconditional positive regard for the values and beliefs 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.

### **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.

## Outcomes

### **Inclusion and differentiated learning:**

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual students in respect to students' 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 students 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. Particular programmes will be organised by the SENCO and Inclusion team as need arises and following review meetings with parents. These will sometimes involve input from specialist services e.g. the Autism Outreach team.

### **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 students, 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 curriculum delivered predominantly through; Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Religious Education, Physical Education and ICT. Appendices to this policy provide further information about the programme and resources for suggested use.

### **Teaching Methods:**

As in every other area of the curriculum, opportunities will be provided for students to assess evidence, make individual and group choices and decisions, learn to listen and negotiate, look at ways of dealing with conflict and solving problems.

In discussion they will think and work both independently and with others and in doing so increase their self-awareness and self-esteem. Group work will enable students to explore other people's points of view, consider diversity, fairness and justice as well as competition, prejudice and discrimination. Developing their questioning and critical thinking skills will help students to make informed and balanced choices.

Following implementation of the new Religious Education Directory, RSE will be delivered at Key Stage 3 via a series of dropdown days. Sensitive content will be delivered appropriately by members of the RE department who have received Diocesan RSE training.

Expert input from outside speakers will be included. Outside speakers will work within a Catholic framework when delivering education in sexuality.

## **Outline in Year 7 Science**

### *Mechanics of human reproduction*

- Identify the structures and organs in the human reproductive system
- Describe the functions of the structures and organs of the male reproductive system.
- Identify sperm cells as specialised cells and recall that they are adapted to their functions. Suggest outcomes caused by problems with reproductive organs.

### *Fertilisation*

- Describe how a woman becomes pregnant after fertilisation and correctly use the term: implantation.
- Describe what happens during cell division.
- Explain how identical and non-identical twins occur. *Growth of a baby*
- Recall the names of the structures surrounding the developing foetus. Difference between foetus and embryo.
- Identify the placenta and umbilical cord.
- Describe how the developing foetus is protected inside the mother.

### *The role of the placenta*

- Describe the function of the placenta, umbilical cord and amniotic fluid.
- Understand which substances a developing embryo must receive and get rid of to remain healthy.
- Explain how a mother's lifestyle choice can affect the embryo during development.
- Describe the effects of some substances that may harm a developing foetus.
- Explain why ultrasound scans are used during pregnancy.

## **Outline in Year 7 Religious Education *Belonging***

- To reflect on the nature and importance of shared values within a community
- To consider the importance of inclusivity and how others should be treated
- To celebrate diversity and the unique value of gifts, purpose and vocation
- To explore the relationship between rights and responsibilities

### *Friendship*

- To explore the meaning and significance of 'belonging'
- To consider the power of decision making (positive and negative choices)
- To reflect on how we choose our friendship groups
- To make judgements as to whether our friendships shape who we become

### *Self-Identity*

- To reflect on personal qualities, skills and ambitions
- To consider how others should be treated within the community
- To explore the relationship between rights and responsibilities

### *Family Life*

- To explore different types of family in modern society (nuclear/reconstituted)
- To assess different attitudes towards marriage in modern society
- To reflect on marriage and parenthood as a Christian vocation
- To consider reasons for divorce and Catholic Church teaching surrounding it

- To make judgements concerning roles within the family

#### *Form Group Retreat Day*

- To forge positive relationships with other students within the form group
- To consider implications of language and communication
- To reflect on the importance of being honest, kind and inclusive

#### **Outline in Year 8 Science *Inheritance***

##### *of genetics*

- Explain the role of DNA in the characteristics of a person
- Describe the possible effect of mutations of the DNA could have on the characteristics or health of the person
- Discuss the ethics of genetically inherited diseases including screening for these

##### *Genetic technologies*

- Use knowledge about genes to explain how to create an embryo with three parents.
- Discuss making a decision about a new technology using ethical thinking.

#### **Outline in Year 8 Religious Education**

##### *Healthy Relationships*

- To distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationships
- To consider the signs of being in a healthy relationship
- To evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of being in a relationship

##### *Abusive Relationships*

- To recognise signs of physical, emotional, or psychological abuse
- To know the law concerning harmful sexual behaviour
- To understand the law surrounding consent
- To explore the dangers surrounding female genital mutilation (FGM)

##### *Social Media*

- To assess the risks posed by inappropriate use of social media
- To analyse dangers surrounding online abuse, bullying and sextortion
- To consider the risks of online screen addiction and pornography

##### *Sexual and Gender Identity*

- To explore different types of sexual and gender identity LGBTQ+
- To assess different views both within secular society and the Church
- To consider what the Church's position should be on the question of identity

## **Same Sex Partnerships**

- To consider same sex partnerships in the light of scripture and tradition
- To contrast Christian views with that of secular opinion
- To evaluate the Church's position on same sex partnerships
- To evaluate same sex parenting (through adoption or in vitro fertilization)

## ***Theology of the Body***

- To explore the teaching of St John Paul II on the body as something good
- To consider the impact of choices on self-esteem, friendships and relationships
- To evaluate the importance of having and maintaining self-respect

## **Outline in Year 9 Science**

### *Sexual & asexual reproduction*

- Know what a clone is
- Describe the process of asexual reproduction
- Compare asexual and sexual reproduction

### *Genetic inheritance in action and sex determination*

- Explain how sex (gender) is determined in humans.
- Predict what features a child might inherit

### *Inherited disorders*

- Describe the symptoms of inherited disorders
- Explain how disorders can be inherited using genetic diagrams
- Discuss the idea of gene therapy

### *Cloning and Ethics of Gene Technologies*

- Know some of the concerns and uncertainties about the new genetic technologies such as cloning and genetic engineering and 3 parent embryo

### *Monoclonal antibodies – production and uses (HT)*

- Describe how monoclonal antibodies are produced
- Describe some of the ways in which Monoclonal antibodies can be used in pregnancy tests
- Evaluate advantages and disadvantages of Monoclonal antibodies

## **Outline in Year 9 Religious Education**

### *Healthy Relationships*

- To distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationships
- To consider signs of physical, emotional or psychological abuse
- To evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of being in a relationship

### *Sexual and Gender Identity*

- To explore different types of sexual and gender identity LGBTQ+
- To assess different views both within secular society and the Church
- To consider what the Church's position should be on the question of identity

### *Sexual Relationships*

- To understand the teachings of Pope John Paul II in Theology of the Body
- To assess magisterial teaching on sex as marital, unitive and procreative
- To consider different perspectives in society concerning sex before marriage
- To understand different types of STDs and STIs and the nature of HIV

### *Same Sex Partnerships*

- To consider the story of Alan Turing and attitudes towards homosexuality
- To consider same sex partnerships in the light of scripture and tradition
- To contrast Christian views with that of secular opinion
- To evaluate the Church's position on same sex partnerships
- To evaluate same sex parenting (through adoption or in vitro fertilization)

### *Contraception*

- To understand different Christian attitudes towards artificial contraception
- To analyse the position of the Roman Catholic Church in Humanae Vitae
- To make judgements about the implications of Catholic Church teaching

### *Family Life and Divorce*

- To explore different types of family in modern society (nuclear/reconstituted)
- To consider reasons for divorce and Catholic Church teaching surrounding it
- To make judgements concerning scripture (Matthew 19: 9 and Mark 10: 11)

### *Sexual Morality*

- To explore the nature and purpose of sexual love using 'Theology of the Body'
- To assess different attitudes towards premarital sex and cohabitation
- To understand different Christian attitudes towards artificial contraception

### *Sexual Health*

- To understand the risks of sexually transmitted diseases and infections
- To understand about HIV and antiretroviral treatments
- To be aware of the risks surrounding different types of pregnancy

### *Abortion*

- To understand the nature of and the laws concerning abortion
- To analyse arguments for and against abortion
- To evaluate Catholic Church teaching and the sanctity of life argument

#### *Euthanasia*

- To understand the nature of and the laws concerning euthanasia
- To analyse arguments for and against euthanasia
- To evaluate Catholic Church teaching and the sanctity of life argument

#### *Vocation*

- To understand the meaning of vocation and consider different types
- To explore the vocations of priesthood and marriage
- To evaluate the importance of vocation

## **Outline in Year 10 Science**

#### *Sexual & asexual reproduction*

- Know what a clone is
- Describe the process of asexual reproduction
- Compare asexual and sexual reproduction

#### *Genetic inheritance in action and sex determination*

- Explain how sex (gender) is determined in humans.
- Predict what features a child might inherit

#### *Inherited disorders*

- Describe the symptoms of inherited disorders
- Explain how disorders can be inherited using genetic diagrams
- Discuss the idea of gene therapy

#### *Cloning and Ethics of Gene Technologies*

- Know some of the concerns and uncertainties about the new genetic technologies such as cloning and genetic engineering

#### *Monoclonal antibodies – production and uses (HT)*

- Describe how monoclonal antibodies are produced
- Describe some of the ways in which Monoclonal antibodies can be used in pregnancy tests
- Evaluate advantages and disadvantages of Monoclonal antibodies

## *Reproductive hormones & the menstrual cycle*

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- Know the hormones that cause the secondary sexual characteristics  
Describe the effect of the hormones in the menstrual cycle
- Explain the interaction of the hormones in the menstrual cycle and interpret graphs that show hormone levels

### *Contraception*

- Know different types of contraceptive methods
- Describe how different contraceptive methods work
- Evaluate methods of contraception and socio, economic, environmental and personal issues associated.

### *IVF (HT only)*

- Know which hormones are used in IVF
- Describe the process of IVF
- Evaluate the use of IVF

## **Outline in Year 10 Religious Education**

### *Relationship with God*

- To explore the nature of human beings as conveyed in Genesis I and II
- To explore the nature of identity portrayed through by Michelangelo
- To assess what it is to be a human being and have a conscience (Imago Dei)
- To explore the meaning and significance of the Ten Commandments
- To explore the meaning and importance of vocation
- To explore the meaning and importance of the sacraments
- To evaluate the importance of mission and evangelism
- Units on Incarnation and Trinity (exploring the nature of God)
- Units on Redemption and Kingdom (exploring our connection with God)

### *Relationship with Others*

- To consider the teachings of Jesus Christ (the Beatitudes)
- To assess the importance of the Sheep and the Goats and the Good Samaritan
- To explore the meaning and importance of the Ten Commandments
- To explore the meaning and importance of vocation
- To evaluate the importance of mission and evangelism

### *Abortion*

- To understand the nature of and the laws concerning abortion
- To analyse arguments for and against abortion
- To evaluate Catholic Church teaching and the sanctity of life argument

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### *Euthanasia*

- To understand the nature of and the laws concerning euthanasia
- To analyse arguments for and against euthanasia
- To evaluate Catholic Church teaching and the sanctity of life argument

### *Knife Crime Presentation*

- To explore the reasons why some young people chooses to carry knives
- To consider the consequences of falling victim to a knife attack
- To understand the law and the consequences of being found in possession

### *Chelsea's Choice*

- To understand the nature and importance of consent in law
- To identify signs of grooming leading to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- To understand the risks involved in sexting and sharing of personal data
- To consider signs of being in an unhealthy or potentially abusive relationship
- To understand what to do and where to turn in the event of suspected CSE

## **Outline in Year 11 Science**

### *Sexual & asexual reproduction*

- Know what a clone is
- Describe the process of asexual reproduction
- Compare asexual and sexual reproduction

### *Genetic inheritance in action and sex determination*

- Explain how sex (gender) is determined in humans.
- Predict what features a child might inherit

### *Inherited disorders*

- Describe the symptoms of inherited disorders
- Explain how disorders can be inherited using genetic diagrams
- Discuss the idea of gene therapy

### *Cloning and Ethics of Gene Technologies*

- Know some of the concerns and uncertainties about the new genetic technologies such as cloning and genetic engineering

### *Monoclonal antibodies – production and uses (HT)*

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- Describe how monoclonal antibodies are produced
- Describe some of the ways in which Monoclonal antibodies can be used in pregnancy tests
- Evaluate advantages and disadvantages of Monoclonal antibodies

#### *Reproductive hormones & the menstrual cycle*

- Know the hormones that cause the secondary sexual characteristics
- Describe the effect of the hormones in the menstrual cycle
- Explain the interaction of the hormones in the menstrual cycle and interpret graphs that show hormone levels

#### *Contraception*

- Know different types of contraceptive methods
- Describe how different contraceptive methods work
- Evaluate methods of contraception and socio, economic, environmental and personal issues associated.

#### *IVF (HT only)*

- Know which hormones are used in IVF
- Describe the process of IVF
- Evaluate the use of IVF

### **Outline in Year 11 Religious Education**

#### *Theology of the Body*

- To explore the notion that the human body is an 'embodied spirit'
- To understand the nature of the body as both sexual and sanctified
- To analyse the views of Pope John Paul II on sexual intercourse
- To evaluate Catholic Church teaching that life and sexual intercourse is a gift

#### *Sex before Marriage*

- To understand magisterial teaching on sex (marital, unitive and procreative)
- To consider secular views in contrast to Catholic Church teaching
- To evaluate the Catholic Church's position on sex before marriage

#### *The Sacrament of Marriage*

- To understand the nature of marriage as sacramental and as a covenant
- To assess the necessary conditions for a valid marriage
- To evaluate the importance of the marriage vows and the need for children

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### *Divorce and Separation*

- To understand Catholic Church teaching on annulment
- To evaluate different Christian perspectives surrounding divorce
- To analyse Catholic Church teaching in the context of scripture

### *Cohabitation*

- To understand Catholic Church teaching surrounding cohabitation
- To contrast Church teaching with secular opinion
- To evaluate the Church's position on 'trial marriages'

### *Same Sex Partnerships*

- To understand different Christian attitudes towards same sex partnerships
- To consider same sex partnerships in the light of scripture and tradition
- To contrast Christian views with that of secular opinion
- To evaluate the Church's position on same sex partnerships

### *Contraception*

- To understand different Christian attitudes towards artificial contraception
- To analyse the position of the Roman Catholic Church in *Humanae Vitae*
- To make judgements about the implications of Catholic Church teaching

### *Roles within the Family*

- To understand the importance of the family as the 'Church in miniature'
- To explore the importance of different roles within the family
- To make judgements as to the importance of gender roles

## **Year 13 A2 Biology**

### *How excretory products can be used in medical diagnosis.*

- Describe the use of urine samples in diagnostic tests, with reference to the use of monoclonal antibodies in pregnancy testing and testing for anabolic steroids and drugs.

## **Outline in Sixth Form General Religious Education**

### *Theology of the Body*

- To explore the notion that the human body is an 'embodied spirit'
- To understand the nature of the body as both sexual and sanctified
- To analyse the views of Pope John Paul II on sexual intercourse
- To evaluate Catholic Church teaching that life and sexual intercourse is a gift

### *Secular Attitudes towards Sex*

- To understand the Church's teaching concerning promiscuity and contraception
- To consider the implications of premarital sex for society as a whole
- To reflect on the values underlying individualism and existentialism
- To contrast different views in relation to sexual liberalisation and chastity
- To make judgements concerning the Church's stance on sexual relationships

### *The Moral Maze*

- To debate different opinions surrounding abortion and organ donation
- To make judgments as to the intrinsic value of a human life

- To discuss and present solutions to ethical dilemmas

## **PSHE Programme**

### *Y8 Drugs and Alcohol Awareness*

- To understand the nature and effects of different types of drugs
- To explore the reasons why some students choose to take drugs
- To examine the correlation between drugs use and mental health problems
- To examine the correlation between drugs use and wider health problems
- To examine the correlation between drugs use, violence and criminal activity
- To consider the consequences of becoming addicted to drugs

### *Y7-13 Knife Crime Presentation*

- To explore the reasons why some young people choose to carry knives
- To consider the consequences of falling victim to a knife attack
- To understand the law and the consequences of being found in possession

### *Y7-13 County Lines Presentation*

- To explore the reasons as to why some young people become involved with County Lines
- To consider the consequences of involvement with County Lines

### *Y7-13 Anti-bullying*

- To consider the different forms of bullying
- To consider the damage caused by bullying
- To explore the reasons why some people choose to bully others
- To consider the features of healthy and respectful relationships with others

## **Post 16**

### *Sixth Form Conference Day Year 12:*

During this day students will examine some of the issues surrounding the transition from school to university life and discuss issues around personal respect and respect for others.

## **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.

Parents were consulted before this policy was ratified by the governors. They were able to view the resources used by the school in the RSE programme. Our aim was that, at the end of the consultation process, every parent and carer would have full confidence in the school's RSE programme to meet their child's needs.

**Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RSE** except in those elements pertaining to relationships or 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.

## **Balanced Curriculum**

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that students are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. Students will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE (in secondary schools/academies relating to forced-marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion, the age of consent and legislation relating to equality). 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 students have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.

## **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)**

***We abide with the directives as set out by the DfE and Equality Act 2010:***

“Schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect...’ Schools should ensure that their teaching is sensitive and age-appropriate in approach and content. At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT, they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson.’

*DfE Statutory Guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education 2020, 36-37 (\*The school takes LGBT to be interpreted in its broadest sense here, encompassing all members of the LGBTQ+ community. This topic is delivered with sensitivity and in strict accordance with Catholic Church teaching whereby all people are created *imago Dei* and as such are of intrinsic worth and possess equal dignity.*

## **Responsibility for Teaching the Programme**

Responsibility for the specific Relationships and Sex Education programme is held by the Head of RE and staff with responsibility for PSHE in conjunction with all Heads of Department and teaching staff (particularly Science, Religious Education, Physical Education and the Chaplain as well as the School Nursing Service). However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE programme. They will be

role models for students of good, healthy, wholesome relationships as between staff, other adults and students. They will also be contributing to the development of pupil's personal and social skills.

## **External Resources**

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 teaching 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 'Protocol for Visitors to Catholic 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**

- Approve the RSE policy, in consultation with parents and teachers and statutory guidance;
- 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, our mission, CES guidelines and statutory guidance from the DfE;
- 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.

## **Governors Must Ensure That:**

- All students make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes;
- The subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned;
- The quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;
- Teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support the subjects;
- Teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND;
- Clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn; and,
- The subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

## **Headteacher**

The Headteacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi Academy Trust, the Diocesan Schools' Service and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

## **RSE Co-Ordinator**

The role of RSE co-ordinator will be undertaken by the Head of RE. Together with the Headteacher, the RSE co-ordinator 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 Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools, CES, Feb. 2011 (SEE APPENDIX) provision of in-service training. (They may be further supported by the Vice Principals and the Designated Safeguarding Lead).

## **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 students. 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.) Students 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 students. Learning about RSE in PSHE classes will link to/complement learning in those areas identified in the RSE audit.

## **Children's Questions**

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. They want to ensure that students 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 students, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. (See also Sex and Relationship Guidance, 4.5 'Dealing with questions' 0116/2000, Department for Education and Employment, July 2000 for more

detail – SEE APPENDIX) 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 students 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 students 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 students 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. Students will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in the programme. Teachers will always help students facing personal difficulties, in line with the school's pastoral care. Teachers should explain to students that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance. Teachers will explain that in such circumstance they would have to inform others, e.g., parents, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and that the students would always be informed that such action was going to be taken.

## **Monitoring And Evaluation**

The Head of RE as RSE Co-ordinator will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of students work at regular intervals. The programme will be evaluated **biannually** by means of questionnaires / response sheets/needs assessment given to students, and / or by discussion with students, 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. The directors of The St Thomas Aquinas Multi Academy Trust remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

## **Right to Be Excused From Sex Education**

We note the DfE guidance that parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request the Headteacher or another member of staff so directed will discuss the request with the parent and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16 from particular sessions relating to Sex Education. After that point, if the young person wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

*DfE Statutory Guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education 2020, 46-47.*

## ADDENDUM

In light of recent studies it is becoming clear that many children are continuing to be exposed to higher levels of sexualised language and sexualised images online. This is resulting in more cases of highly sexualised behaviour. Many of these problems appear to have been exasperated as a result of the pandemic and the inevitable increase in computer usage.

Evidence suggests that girls and boys very often have different perceptions as to what is acceptable in terms of behaviour. Unfortunately, a disproportionate number of girls are being added to groups and sent explicit videos against their wishes. This rapid acceleration of online activity has fostered its own set of rules which appears to entail a culture of name calling, victim blaming and fear.

**In light of these developments the school has taken the following action:**

- Pastoral and Religious Assemblies to emphasise the importance of treating ourselves and others with respect at all times particularly when interacting online and using social media. Respect is one of our core values of the English Martyrs Way.
- *The school has purchased Ten Ten - Life to the Full* which is explicitly designed to *meet all statutory RSE requirements* by addressing *relationships, respect, personal identity, health and wellbeing, online behaviour and safety, and life changes* through a developmentally sequenced programme. It is used in Catholic primary and secondary schools and explicitly designed to **cover the statutory RSE requirements** while integrating a Christian vision of human dignity, relationships and personal wellbeing.
- The increasing risks and dangers of online sexual exploitation are to be discussed within form time. Form tutors emphasise the importance of well-being on a weekly basis and deliver sessions created to encourage form time discussion.
- Action has been taken to update the schools' reporting systems. Form tutors continue to remind students of what they must do if faced with a potentially dangerous situation and where they can and should turn to for help and support.

- ‘**Safe Space**’ audits to take place whereby groups of students tour the school and identify places they feel they could turn to in order to receive help or support.
- Introduction of **student focus groups** to identify any potential areas of concern and encourage dialogue. Female focus groups in lower school to meet and have discussions with female members of staff in a safe and comfortable atmosphere. Male focus groups in lower school to meet and have discussions with male members of staff in a safe and comfortable atmosphere. Students in Sixth Form to meet and have discussions with Head of Sixth Form.
- The school has trained a group of Online Safety ambassadors to deliver CPD and lead assemblies to the rest of the school about how to keep themselves safe online. Training has been conducted by the Lead Safeguarding Officer for the CMAT.