



Company number 8180450

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Umbrella Trust

Relationships and Sex Education Policy



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Policy for Relationships and Sex Education

INTRODUCTION

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out our rationale for and approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in the school.

Implementation and Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years by Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Umbrella Trust Policy Committee and implemented by the RSE coordinator, the Senior Leadership Team and the Governors of the school.

Dissemination

The policy will be given to all members of the Governing Body, and all teaching and support staff. Copies of the document will be available to all parents through the school's prospectus 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.

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 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. The DfE identifies three main elements, "attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding".

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

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.

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, and support will be provided to help pupils deal with different sets of values.

At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation. As a consequence of the Christian belief that we are made in the image and likeness of God, gender and sexuality are seen as God's gift, reflect God's beauty, and share in the divine creativity. RSE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationship, as it is there that sexuality grows and develops.

Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales, and as advocated by the DfE, RSE will be firmly embedded in the PSHE framework, as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils. It is centred on Christ's vision of being human as good news and will be positive and prudent, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.

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 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 RSE

We are committed 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, 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.

We will strive to develop in pupils 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

We aim 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
- cultivating humility, mercy and compassion, learning to forgive and be forgiven
- 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
- 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 that there are different aspects of love
- assessing risks and managing behaviours in order to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity

We will encourage pupils 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
- medical advice on health and hygiene.

INCLUSION AND DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING

We will ensure that 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. This links to the school's Equality and Behaviour policies. This policy will also support the school to develop pupils who are conscious of the need to treat everyone with dignity, respect and tolerance.

EQUALITIES OBLIGATIONS

The Governing Body has wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that the school strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children. We will ensure that pupils who are vulnerable, for whatever reason, are not subject to exploitation.

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
- a specific relationships and sex curriculum.

PROGRAMME

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- experiential
- active
- brainstorming
- film & video
- group work
- role-play
- trigger drawings
- values clarification

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

Teachers will build in opportunities for assessment of learning at regular intervals during lessons. This will be done in an interactive and engaging way to ensure that pupils are given the best chance of recalling and retrieving information. Examples of this include:

- Mini quizzes
- Multiple choice quizzes
- 'Revision' notes
- Posters

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 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.

Parents have ***the right to withdraw*** their children from RSE 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 Head Teacher/Head of School. **However, it is strongly advised that parents discuss their concerns with the Head Teacher/Head of School before giving notice of withdrawal.**

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, virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE. Knowing about facts and enabling young people to explore differing viewpoints is not the same as promoting behaviour and is not incompatible with our school's promotion of Catholic teaching.

We will ensure that pupils have access to the learning they need to stay safe and healthy and to understand their rights as individuals.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHING THE PROGRAMME

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lies with St Thomas of Canterbury School, and is led by the Head of School (Mr Colclough) and the RE co-ordinator (Mr Richardson) However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE programme. They will be role models for pupils of good, healthy, wholesome relationships as between staff, other adults and pupils. They will also be contributing to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.

External Visitors

Our school may call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSE. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher led sessions. It is important that any external visitor is clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in school delivering a session. Any visitor must adhere to the 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 and the Umbrella Trust Policy Committee

- Draw up the RSE policy, in consultation with parents and teachers
- Ensure that the policy is available to parents
- Ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g. SEN, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs
- Ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children
- Establish a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used
- Ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHE

Head Teacher/Head of School

The Head Teacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, the Diocesan Schools' Department, the Local Education Authority (where appropriate) and appropriate agencies.

PSHE/RSE Co-ordinator

The co-ordinator, with the Head Teacher/Head of School has a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to RSE and the provision of in-service training.

All Staff

RSE is a whole school issue. All teachers have a responsibility of care; as well as fostering academic progress they should actively contribute to the guardianship and guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of their pupils. Teachers will be expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSE. All staff have been included in the development of this policy and all staff should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

This RSE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHE framework. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents for example, the Behaviour, Safeguarding Policy and Equality policies.

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

Learning about RSE in PSHE classes will link to/complement learning in those areas identified in the RSE audit. The overview of the programme from Years 1-6 can be found in the PSHE framework which forms part of the school's curriculum documentation.

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

The Governors aim to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can be delivered. They wish to ensure that pupils can ask questions freely, be confident that their questions will be answered in an age-appropriate manner and be sure that they will be free from bullying or harassment from other children.

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 and protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion.

Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, for example, where a child or young person's questions hint at abuse, are deliberately tendentious or are 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. Consideration will be given by senior leaders as to how teachers will be able to create the right environment for delivering lessons. Effective RSE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue. Teachers will need to be aware of the needs of their pupils and not let any fears and worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects that a child or young person is a victim of or is at risk of abuse they are required to follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible. Teachers will be supported in ensuring that they know what to do, particularly in the case of disclosure of abuse.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ADVICE

School leaders will ensure that all Governors, teachers, support staff, parents and pupils are 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, for example, in matters which are illegal or abusive. Teachers will explain that in such circumstance they would have to inform others, such as the parents and the Head Teacher/Head of School, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The RSE Co-ordinator, in association with the Head of School and RE link governor, 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 will 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 ultimate responsibility for this policy rests with the Governors of the school.

Review date: February 2019 (Brought forward from 2020 as a result of the publication of the model RSE policy from the Diocese of Hallam)