

POLICY FOR RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION



ST FRANCIS RC PRIMARY

2023-2024

St Francis Catholic Primary School, SE15 1RQ

Vision and Mission Statement and Gospel Values

Our Vision

Providing every child with the tools to choose their path to success.

Our Mission

In St Francis children succeed because:

- ✓ We are an outward looking Catholic Primary school, which welcomes all children from the surrounding area. We work together to nurture our pupils, helping them to become resilient and inspired learners, who will become responsible global citizens of the future.
- ✓ We cultivate our pupils through our broad and diverse curriculum and loving Catholic Parish community
- ✓ We provide a welcoming, safe and supportive environment that helps children feel respected, confident and motivated to achieve their goals.
- ✓ We also foster a spiritual and moral view of life that provides children with a sense of self-worth and a strong Catholic ethos

Our Gospel Values

Love

Honesty

Courage

Tolerance

Justice

Jeremiah 29:11

“I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for”





Policy for Education in Human Love ~ Relationship and Sex Education

The Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools. (***DfE, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education RSE and Health Education guidance***)

Basic Information:

The intentions of this policy are to:

- make clear Relationship and Sex Education expectations in a primary school setting
- to share the scheme of work used by the school and how this covers what is expected in accordance with the DfE guidelines
- to share the link the teaching of RSE in schools within a faith school setting
- to share the roles and responsibilities of the school, staff, parents and governors

It was produced by the RE coordinator of St Francis RC Primary School through consultation with SLT and Governors, it will be reviewed annually.

Dissemination:

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

Catholic Vision

"God created man and woman in his own image, with equal dignity, different yet complimentary, our sexuality is a gift from God, and must be expressed accordingly to his will and love. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and we are one body with Christ. Genuine love is the fundamental vocation of every human being" (***The Catechism of the Catholic Church***)

Background

The Church has always recognised that it is a privilege and responsibility of the family to inform and educate their children in all matters pertaining to human growth and development, particularly in the sensitive area of sexual development (***Gaudium et Spes, n52, Familiaris Consortio, n37, Education Guidance in Human Love, n 48***). Parents have the first responsibility for educating their child, both in the Faith and in their social interactions with others.

However, it has also recognised that due to the difficulties which this area of education encounters, parents need a 'major commitment on the part of the Christian community' and calls on the school, the parish and other bodies to collaborate with the family (***EGHL n54***). We see our role as supporting the family in this responsibility.

In accordance with the Education Act of 1988, St Francis's School offers a curriculum which:

- a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils who are members of the school and of society
- b) prepares such pupils for the opportunities, **responsibilities** and **experiences of adult life**.

We believe that appropriate and responsible relationship and sex education is an important element in preparing pupils for adult life.

Church Teachings

The basic document on sex education in the Catholic community is that published by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in 1983, *Education Guidance in Human Love*. The Bishops of England and Wales also published a statement, Laying the Foundations for Education in Personal Relationships, at the Low Week Meeting of April 1987. One quotation from each document gives a flavour of the content of each:

“Sex education is not reducible to simple teaching material, nor theoretical knowledge alone, nor does it consist of a programme to be carried out progressively, but it has a specific objective view: an effective maturation of pupils’ self control and of correct behaviour in special relationships” *Educational Guidance in Human Love*.

“Sex education cannot be reduced to simply the giving of biological facts. Our schools have the responsibility to ensure that the information our children are given is received in the context of the Christian community and with Christian values, and based on sound moral principles”.
Bishops’ Conference 1987.

Though parents have the primary responsibility for education in these matters, it is often someone outside of the family who is better able to teach this subject. Our School believes in a partnership between home, school and parish.

Defining Relationship and Sex Education

The DfE guidance states that “children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way”. It is about the development of the pupil’s knowledge and understanding of her or him as a sexual being, about what it means to be fully human, called to live in right relationships with self and others and being enabled to make moral decisions in conscience. In primary schools the focus should be on “teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults.” (***CES A Model Policy for Relationships and Sex Education 2016 Revised 2020***) This would include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

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.

Virtues and Values

Gospel virtues and values underpin the RSE curriculum. The Christian tradition describes behaviour or habits that lead to happiness, human flourishing and a closer relationship with God as virtues. These virtues are described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and fall into two groups. The theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (sometimes simply ‘love’ is used instead of ‘charity’) are about developing the habits of being open to the work of the Holy Spirit and developing a deeper relationship with God through living a balanced and good life. The cardinal virtues of practical wisdom (prudence), justice, fortitude and temperance help people develop habits of reason, fairness, emotional resilience and self-mastery. They are human virtues and, as such, are part of the development of people of all faiths or none as they learn how to flourish, thrive and to have a life supported by strong and caring relationships. The cardinal virtues are drawn from the teachings of Plato and Aristotle and are held in common with people of many faiths and secular beliefs. St. Thomas Aquinas attributes the theological virtues as having their foundation in God, they complete the cardinal virtues and are the way people can reach “the abundant life” (John 10:10).

Aims and Objectives

In accordance with the recommendation of the Diocese, Relationship and Sex Education is taught in our primary school, so that pupils will be able to learn about the Church's teaching on all these areas and encouraged to develop healthy attitudes and an understanding of the essential goodness and holiness of God's creation. Our policy aims to make clear the moral considerations upon which our Education in Personal Relationships is based, with due emphasis on the importance of family life. We recognise that a diversity of relationships exist within society. While reaffirming Catholic teaching we remain non-judgemental and emphasise that a loving and caring environment is paramount.

As a school community we recognise that parents have the prime responsibility for teaching their children about Relationships and Sex Education. We will therefore, supplement and support our parents with appropriate programmes of study for all our pupils.

We aim to:

- Make the children feel loved, cared for and secure in surroundings where Catholic values are practised and where courtesy, respect and consideration for others are of paramount importance;
- Develop a sensible, responsible, factual, basis of knowledge founded on love and the teaching of the Catholic Church;
- Guide their understanding that healthy relationships are God's gift to us and should be enjoyed and never abused. Within our relationship education we teach our pupils about:
 - Looking after and maintaining a healthy body;
 - Respecting their bodies;
 - The importance of family life;
 - Building positive relationships with others, involving trust and respect;
 - Moral questions;
 - Respecting the views of other people.

To enable our pupils to live a full and satisfying life we want them:

To Grow In Friendship with Themselves

- To know that they are uniquely loved
- To appreciate their personal worth and talents
- To recognise and positively respond to their limitations
- To respect and care for themselves
- To make informed choices and accept personal responsibility
- To understand their physical development respecting and reverencing the wonder of their bodies

To Grow In Friendship with God

- To appreciate that God loves us first and forever
- To appreciate and value relationship and God as integral to human fulfilment
- To appreciate the whole of creation as a sign of God's love
- To develop their personal relationship with God through prayer and meditation
- To develop their relationship with God through shared prayer and worship

To Grow In Friendship with Others

- To know that others are also uniquely loved

- To deepen their appreciation of their relationship with their parents
- To appreciate and respect the work and talents of others
- To respect the beliefs, values and cultures of others
- To develop friendships and positive relationships
- To cope with difficulties in relationships
- To understand and appreciate the wonder of human love and the creation of new human life
- To understand their social responsibilities
- To enable them to become responsible citizens
- To encourage a progressive understanding and engagement in commitment

To Grow In Friendship with the World Around

- To appreciate the goodness of creation as loved by God
- To appreciate the wonder of the beauty of the natural world
- To learn respect and care for the natural world
- To understand the importance of our natural environment and grow in understanding of our responsibility for it.

Vatican II states...

“..Children and young people should be helped to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual qualities ... they should receive a positive and prudent education in matters relating to sex ... and young people have the right to be stimulated to make sound moral judgements based on a well-informed conscience and to put them into practice with a sense of personal commitment ...”

Gravissimum Educationis (para 1), Second Vatican Council

Outcomes

Inclusion and Differentiated Learning

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. 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.

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 any differences or needs they may have.

Our Approach

Our Education in Personal Relationships Programme will be delivered by following the developmental programme “A Journey In Love” for EYFS and “Life to the Full” For Years 1-6.

A Catholic primary school resource for Sex and Relationship Education

'Life to the Full' is the recommended programme of study for Catholic schools for Relationship and Sex Education, and has been written as a progressive scheme of work that supports the Religious Education, PSHE and Science curricula taught within the school. This programme of RE (Relationship Education) in primary schools is a tool for equipping children to live life to the full. It is a programme that has been supported by the Diocese of Southwark. The framework of the Life to the Full programme is taken from the Model Catholic RSE Programme by the Catholic Education Service, which has been highlighted by the Department of Education as a work of good practice.

As children progress through school, they discover more and more about themselves and the wider world. This thirst for learning new things in all aspects of life is fostered by the school, who attempt to create a safe, stimulating environment for learning; supporting all children in their development.

The content is age appropriate and is taught with sensitivity, taking into account the children's level of maturity in regard to the delivery of the lessons. As with all aspects of learning, children are naturally curious and many will have questions related to their lessons. Opportunities to discuss questions form part of the lessons and, again, these are treated with care and understanding.

In Life to the Full Plus, there is a three stage structure, which is repeated across three different learning stages: KS1 (Years 1 and 2), Lower KS2 (Years 3 and 4), Upper KS2 (Years 5 and 6).

Within each learning stage, there are three modules which are based on the Model RSE Catholic Curriculum:

- Created and loved by God
- Created to love others
- Created to live in community

Each topic within the programme will draw on key virtues that sit at the heart of Catholic education; virtues such as respect, appreciation, patience, forgiveness, justice, service and commitment. These virtues are the pillars around which the entire teaching and learning will be based.

Early Years - Children know and understand that God has made them unique and that although we are all different we are all special to him. These children will continue to follow 'A Journey in Love,' which is another recommended programme of study for Catholic schools for Relationship and Sex Education, Our school has been using this scheme for a number of years now and will continue to be used when needed.

The whole school will follow their topics throughout the school year. Parents can follow the information being provided on the Life to the Full Parent Portal through the TenTen website. We will also encourage children to bring work home so that they can discuss what they have been learning at home.

"I found their work to be effective, educative and extremely well done. TenTen is responding to a real and tangible need for resources which place the gift of sexual relations within the context of marriage and which help young people to realistically understand the joy and responsibility of parenthood. They promote values which

support Catholic education and I highly commend their work.” ***Vincent Nichols, Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster***

Assessment

Children will be assessed within the scheme of work before and after each module they undertake to assess the progress they have made through each topic. The assessment, known as Ipsative assessment, are presented as pre and post assessment sheets, they will be given to the children to complete by the teachers. Ipsative assessment is the most meaningful because it allows pupils the space for personal reflection to accurately assess, for example, the development of self-confidence, or their sense of identity and values.

The Role of Parents and Carers

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children. Children’s first experience of relationships and love are in the home. At our school we seek to work with parents and carers and support them as their children grow and begin to develop their own character as well as experiencing changes in their physical appearance. The primary role of parents is paramount to the successful implementation of any policy on RSE/PSHE.

The Church community also has a privileged role in collaborating with parents in their educative task and as a school we see our role as supporting them and working in partnership together. The supportive role of the school will be exercised with sensitivity. The dignity, privacy and modesty of children will always be respected. Teachers will ensure that no pupil feels pressured either to reveal or discuss private matters or to be involved in a way which they might feel distaste or embarrassment.

The links between home / school and parish are of fundamental importance. We see our RSE programme as complementing the teaching and life of home and family.

Consultation

As education in sexuality is a whole school issue all staff, governors and parents will be able to take part in the consultation process and all will be helped to understand their specific role.

Our School is aware that the class teachers, the Learning Mentor, Inclusion Manager, Teaching Assistants and Learning Support Assistants have an immediate role in this topic and will require on-going training.

The legal requirements for the Science curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 include teaching about a number of areas which will be linked with the Church teaching on the sanctity of human life:

- By the end of Key Stage 1 children are expected to understand that human beings move, feed, grow, use their senses and reproduce; to be able to recognise and compare the main external parts of the bodies of human beings; to know that human beings can have children and these grow into adults; to be

able to recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others and treat others with sensitivity.

- By the end of Key Stage 2 children are expected to know that the life processes common to humans and other animals include nutrition, growth and reproduction, and to understand the main stages of the human life cycle.

Right of Withdrawal

The school recognises that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from **sex education** where this is not contained in the National Curriculum. Parents should put this in writing to the Headteacher and arrangements will be made for their child to be withdrawn and suitable materials be shared in replacement of this part of education. The school does hope that parents will see the value of educating children in these matters within the context of the Catholic faith.

The Wider Context of Relationship and Sex Education in the School

Sex education will be taught within the context of relationships and within the wider context of the whole curriculum of the school with its moral and spiritual foundations. Education in sexuality is of its nature 'cross-curricular'. All subjects have a role to play and all members of the school community, by virtue of the relationships they foster within the school, contribute to education in sexuality. It is commonly observed that pupils can raise questions concerning sex education in a great variety of school contexts.

PSHE/RSE Co-Ordinator

The co-ordinators (PSHE and RE) with the head teacher has a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to RSE and the provision of in-service training. (They may be supported by a member of staff with responsibility for safeguarding).

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.

All staff are involved in fostering attitudes, living Gospel virtues and shaping behaviour based on a Christian understanding of how to lead a good life. Staff are called to be role models of the school's ethos in their relationships with other staff members, their conduct towards parents and their care for the children in the school. Staff who are not Catholic themselves must conduct their behaviour in school in accordance with the vision and mission of the school. Teaching and learning about human relationships will be part of the life of the school.

Supporting children and young people deemed to be at risk

Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place. RSE always needs to be taught in a differentiated manner appropriate to the maturity of the children. 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.

Dealing with difficult questions

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. They want to ensure that pupils can ask questions freely, be confident that their questions will be answered, and be sure that they will be free from bullying or harassment from other children and young people.

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 pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. ***(See also Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, Managing difficult questions, Page 23 for more detail)***

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.

The following guidance for dealing with questions in teaching RSE will be followed: Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting.

Many teachers are concerned about responding to unexpected questions or comments from pupils in a whole-class situation. Having a set of ground rules should reduce the chances of this happening but teachers will have support and training so that they are prepared for the unexpected.

For example:

- If a question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupil of the ground rules. If the pupil needs further support, the teacher can refer her or him to the appropriate person;
- If a teacher doesn't know the answer to a question, it is important to acknowledge this, and to suggest that the pupil or teacher or both together research the question later; and
- If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk, they should follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

Confidentiality and Advice

All governors, all teachers, all support staff, all parents and all pupils must be made aware of this policy, particularly as it relates to issues of advice and confidentiality. All lessons, especially those in the RSE programme, will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and sex, developing appropriate personal and social skills and becoming appreciative of the values and attitudes which underpin the Christian understanding of what it means to be fully human. Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in the programme.

Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties, in line with the school's pastoral care policy. Teachers should explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance. Teachers will explain that in such circumstances they would have to inform others, e.g., parents, head teacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

Role of Governors

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the governing boards or management committee should also make sure that:

- all pupils 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;
- 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.

Foundation governors will also have wider responsibilities in relation to maintaining and developing the religious ethos of the schools. (DfE Guidance 2019)

Governors have the legal responsibility of deciding whether or not Relationship and Sex Education should be taught in school. Diocesan advice is that the needs of children require that schools provide such education. Governors have been involved in the development of our scheme of work and agreed this policy.

Policy monitoring and review

The Head teacher, Senior Leadership Team and RE Subject Leader will monitor the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis. The Head teacher and RE Subject Leader will report to the governing body on the effectiveness of the policy.

We are aware of the need to regularly review our policy to take account of new initiatives, changes in curriculum or developments in technology.

Reviewed By: Ms Sonia Miguez Jorge in September 2023

This policy will be reviewed during July 2024
(unless any curriculum changes occur before this time)

Appendix 1

Statutory Requirements

1988 Education Reform Act stated that Sex Education and Health Education are to be given a high priority in our schools.

1993 Education Act put in place the requirement for all schools to have a sex Education Policy in place by September 1994

Circular 5/94 from the DfE defined what should and should not be included in Sex Education.

2020 CES Good Practice in Developing a school RSE Policy 2016 (Revised 2020) A resource that gives guidelines on how to develop an RSE policy in line with the most up to date guidance from the DfE.

2019 DfE Guidance for Headteachers, teachers and Governors entitled Relationship and Sex Education in which Government stressed the importance of stable relationships and recognition of religion and cultural background failed to emphasise adequately the importance of marriage as the essential building block of community and society for the future. It did declare its intention to stop inappropriate and unsuitable materials being used in schools. The paper limited to explain what inappropriate or unsuitable material actually means.

2017 Learning to Love - An introduction to Catholic Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) for Catholic Educators. A resource created by Department of Catholic Education and Formation Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The content of what is taught must express the teaching of the Church, and should be delivered to suit the age of the children or young people to whom it is addressed. We all need to recognise that without providing an education in this area, we leave many young people vulnerable to receiving their education second-hand, and often from sources which damage them and their capacity to love.

2000 Exploring Life's Choices: Education for Personal Relationships in Catholic Schools. A resource for in-service training and the Certificate of Religious Studies produced for the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers by Adrian Dempsey, Chris Fallon, Sean Hall and Paul Uden provides the means for teachers to prepare or update themselves for SRE in today's climate.

2000 Archbishop Nichols, on behalf of the Bishops' Conference for England and Wales, criticised the DfEE guidance paper in its lack of moral principle as a foundation for its recommendations. He declared the hierarchy's intention to ensure that SRE be taught in the context of the Church's moral teaching.