

# St. Mark's Catholic Primary School



## Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

# *Proudly and joyfully, we love, live and learn as God's children.*

In this policy, in partnership with our pupils and their parents/carers, we set out our intentions about relationships and sex education (RSE). We set out our rationale for and approach to relationships and sex education at St. Mark's Catholic Primary School.

## **Consultation that has taken place and will continue to take place with annual reviews includes:**

- Reviews carried out with school Mission Teams
  - Letters sent to parents and meetings held
  - Questionnaires to parents/carers
- Consultation with the wider school community including our MAC and school nurse
  - Consultation with school governors

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW OF POLICY**

Initial implementation of the policy took place after consultation with the Governors in Autumn Term of 2020. This policy will be reviewed every year by the Head teacher, RSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and Staff. This policy will next be reviewed in September 2023.

## **DISSEMINATION**

This policy and future reviews of this policy will be shared with all members of the Governing Body, teaching and non-teaching members of Staff. Copies of the document will be 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 website.

## **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 our school, the focus will 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." This will include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

## **STATUTORY CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS**

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

## **RATIONALE**

**'I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL' (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 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

## **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 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 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.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **To develop the following attitudes and virtues:**

- respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others;
  - 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 identity and that of others;
    - celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love;
  - recognising the importance of marriage and family life.

### **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;
- 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.

## **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; 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 also relates to our SEND Policy and statement of inclusion whereby, 'at St Mark's School we believe all children, no matter what gender, race, or ability, have the right to be educated alongside their peers where possible, and that each child has the right to be valued and respected in the community. We are committed to providing all our pupils with equal opportunities for learning and to helping them realise their full potential in a life-long learning process.'

### **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 pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, pregnancy, maternity, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked-after children.

### **BROAD CONTENT OF OUR RSE CURRICULUM**

There are three aspects of RSE - attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills; these will be provided in three inter-related ways: through a whole school approach to the ethos of our school (including through teaching of RE, Catholic Social Teaching and PSHE); a cross-curricular approach (through other subjects such as Science and Computing); and a specific relationships and sex curriculum. At St. Marks, we work in partnership with Ten:Ten resources, delivering their programme of 'Life to the Full'. This programme is based on 'A Model Catholic RSE Curriculum' by the Catholic Education Service, which was highlighted as a work of good practice by the Department of Education. Therefore, we have a good foundation for a programme that will be fit for purpose over the coming years. This programme goes beyond simply

producing a series of lesson plans; instead, they have created an entire platform of creative resources that engages, informs and inspires our children, parents and staff. It includes interactive video content, story-based activities and original worship music, all whilst employing a wide range of teaching tools and an accompanying programme of classroom prayers.

‘Life to the Full’ follows a four-stage structure which is repeated and developed across four different learning stages:

- Early Years Foundation Stage is aimed at Reception
  - Key Stage One is aimed at Years 1 and 2
- Lower Key Stage Two is aimed at Years 3 and 4
- Upper Key Stage Two is aimed at Years 5 and 6

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

- Created and Loved by God
- Created to Love Others
- Created to Live in Community

Each Module is then broken down into Units of Work:

<b>Module 1</b>	<b>Created and Loved by God</b>
<b>Units</b>	Religious Understanding Me, My Body, My Health Emotional Well-being Life Cycles
<b>Module 2</b>	<b>Created to Love Others</b>
<b>Units</b>	Religious Understanding Personal Relationships Keeping Safe
<b>Module 3</b>	<b>Created to Live in Community</b>
<b>Units</b>	Religious Understanding Living in the Wider World

**Module One:** Created and Loved by God explores the individual. Rooted in the teaching that we are made in the image and likeness of God, it helps children to develop an understanding of the importance of valuing themselves as the basis for personal relationships.

**Module Two:** Created to Love Others explores the individual’s relationship with others. Building on the understanding that we have been created out of love and for love, this Module explores how we take this calling into our family, friendships and relationships, and teaches strategies for developing healthy relationships and keeping safe.

**Module Three:** Created to Live in Community explores the individual’s relationship with the wider world. Here we explore how human beings are relational by nature and are called to love others in the wider community through service, through dialogue and through working for the Common Good.

Each unit of work also has an Assessment Activity associated with it, to be used by class teachers. Not only is it important for teachers to assess whether the outcomes of the programme are being achieved, teachers will demonstrate evidence of this. At St. Mark’s, as Relationship Education is statutory, evidence of assessment is vital. There is one simple Assessment Activity to each unit of sessions. The activities take into account the Learning Objectives of the sessions within the unit and provide before and after evidence that learning has taken place.

## **PARENTS AND CARERS**

At St. Mark's, 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 St. Mark's 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 and invited in for a meeting 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 before this policy is ratified by the governors and will be informed when annual reviews take place. They will be consulted at every stage of the development of the RSE programme, as well as during the process of monitoring, review and evaluation. Parents/Carers 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 continue to have the right to withdraw their children from Sex Education 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 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. Please refer to the DfE guidance Page 17 for further details on the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw).

## **BALANCED CURRICULUM**

Whilst promoting Catholic values and 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, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.

## **RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHING THE PROGRAMME**

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lays with all staff as all staff will be delivering a broad curriculum, including areas such as: science, religious education, physical education, RSE and PSHE. With training from Ten:Ten Resources 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 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 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 to St. Mark's Catholic Primary School must adhere to our code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Checklist for External Speakers to 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:**

- 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:**

The Head teacher (Mrs Linley) takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, the Diocesan Schools' Service and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

### **PSHE/RSE Co-Ordinator:**

The co-ordinator (Miss Dorsett) 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. Both the co-ordinator and head teacher will be supported by all DSLs in school.

### **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, Bullying policy, Safeguarding Policy etc) 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.

## **CHILDREN'S 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. 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 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

## **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.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The RSE Co-ordinator (Miss Dorsett) 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 annually 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 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. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2024.