



PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND

SEX EDUCATION POLICY

St John's Catholic Comprehensive School

STATEMENT

Excellence for All
Service to Others
Inspired by Christ

This Policy was adopted by the FGB

Date: November 2018

Next Review date: November 2020

Guided by our school vision and mission statement, this policy outlines the school's rationale and approach to Relationship and Sex Education (RSE). It is the product of the collaborative efforts of our school Governors, teachers, students and parents. Consultation of this document has been established through student focus groups, parental questionnaires, a review of the RSE curriculum and informed by multidisciplinary meetings with Governor Representatives, the Child Protection Officer, School Nurse, the Head of RE, the Head of Science and the Headteacher.

RATIONALE

Adolescence is a key period of identity formation and developing a strong sense of self is considered to be one of the central tasks of the adolescence. Focused on this goal, many adolescents move from the security of childhood towards the opportunities but also the questions and decisions the adult world seems to offer. In light of this understanding of the adolescent mind-set, we are involved in RSE because of our Christian beliefs about God and the human person. The first theme of Catholic social teaching refers to the unique dignity of each human person made in the image and likeness of God, consequently our approach to RSE is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person, presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals and aims to empower young people as they grow and address the situations of their life experiences. Students also have the opportunity to explore alternative interpretations of the issues addressed in this type of education. This guidance is the blueprint for our planning, delivery and evaluation of RSE programmes.

To guide students through adolescence there is an imperative need for caring adults as a constant in their lives, particularly in the delivery of RSE. Gravissimum Education recognises this as being especially true in the age of rapid social and technological progress. This duty of care is inextricably linked to the teaching vocation of Catholic educators. Indeed, the Congregation for Catholic Education said in 1977, 'teachers are of the first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools'. Guided by these Catholic principles, it is the sensitive handling of relationships and sex education, paired with the mutual respect between teachers and pupils that the caring ethos of a school becomes a reality. Extending upon this, recognition of the collaborative responsibility between parents, teachers, students, governors and the Church for the welfare of all members of the school community, promotes good practice of RSE and indeed safeguards an attitude of care that is infused in every element of school life.

In order to, in part, fulfil our vocation as Christian educators and the statutory curriculum requirements, St. John's has developed comprehensive Relationship and Sex Education programmes. A foundational belief of the Catholic Church is that we are all made in the image and likeness of God, so gender and sexuality are seen as God's gift and share in the divine creativity. Understanding this, RSE will be placed firmly within the context of relationship as it is there that sexuality grows and develops. According to the Department for Education, RSE is defined 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'. Adding to this, RSE will be in accordance with the Church's moral teaching. It will emphasise the importance of marriage and the family whilst acknowledging that all pupils have a fundamental right to be respected regardless of their personal experiences. Those teachers responsible for the delivery of RSE will do so in a sensitive manner differentiating learning to the diverse needs of all students. This is not only a moral obligation but also a responsibility set out in the Equalities Act 2010.

VALUES AND VIRTUES

The RSE programmes at St John's are underpinned by the Catholic values relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life. The programmes will also promote those virtues which are essential in responding to God's call to love others with a proper respect for the dignity and the dignity of the human body. The following virtues will be explicitly promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

AIMS

The aim of Relationship and Sex Education at St. John's Catholic Comprehensive School shares the vision of the Second Vatican Council which spoke of the need for 'a positive and prudent sex education'. This should be

understood within the broader framework of an education for love and mutual self-giving. The programme will be attuned with students' physical, psychological, social, emotional and spiritual maturity.

Principles

Relationships education should 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;
- Responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others;
- 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;
- Learning how to be faithful in a relationship.

Purpose

To develop the following personal and social skills:

- Making sound judgements and good choices which are respectful of the individual's commitments;
- Loving and being loved, and the ability to form friendships and loving relationships free from exploitation, abuse and bullying;
- Managing emotions within relationships confidently and sensitively;
- Developing self-esteem and confidence, demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others;
- Building resilience to appropriately respond and the ability to resist unwanted pressures, recognising the influence and impact of the media, internet and peer groups, assessing risks and managing behaviours in order to minimise the risk to health and personal value and wellbeing.

To know and understand:

- The Church's teaching on relationships and sexual love;
- The physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty;
- The facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love functions are an essential and sacred part of procreation;
- How to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and their life commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception;
- How to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

Method

Relationships Education will be:

- **Taught in Personal Developments Lessons;**
- Taught in Religious Education through the RE Curriculum;
- Incorporated into 'Theme Days' for each year group through presentations, speakers, workshops and with the input of appropriate outside agencies. These agencies will be guided by the relevant in school staff members in their delivery of materials and informed by the code of practice, 'Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools', outlined by the CES;
- Supported by using a broad range of age appropriate resources.

PARENTS AND CARERS

The Catechism of the Catholic Church recognises that parents have the first responsibility for educating their child. Catholic schools assist parents in this role by sharing resources and communicating by letter to parents of when their child will be taught RSE in school. The school respects that parents have the right to withdraw

their child from RSE except from those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. Should parents wish to avail of this option, they are asked to notify the school by contacting the Head of RE. The school will then provide material for parents to help the child in their learning if they so require it.