

RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY

This Education for Personal Relationships Policy is drawn up in the light of the 1993 Education Act: Sex Education in Schools, Circular No. 5/94, the Equality Act 2010, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education 2020 and guidance from the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. This policy is formulated within the framework of the Mission Statement. St Bernard's has a clear responsibility for the personal, social, moral, intellectual and physical development of all students.

"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 in view: an effective maturation of pupils' self control and of correct behaviour in special relationships."

Education Guidance in Human Love

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education 1983

Parents are the primary educators of their children. The school seeks to work with the family in the area of human growth and sexual development so that our young people will have an awareness of the fullness and meaning of life rooted in the love of God.

In developing this policy and the accompanying RSE teaching guidance and curriculum overview, St. Bernard's has engaged with wide ranging consultation, including:

- Review of the RSE curriculum with staff and pupils.
- Consultation with the wider school community through the school Matron.
- Consultation with Governors.
- Consultation with the Parent Focus Group.

Education for Personal Relationships is primarily delivered through Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE), Science lessons and Religious Education lessons in a cross-curricular programme, as well as other relevant areas; e.g. computing and PE.

The Education for Personal Relationships Policy has the following aims:

- To provide a Catholic framework within which students can grow in their understanding of human sexuality.
- To give students a full understanding of their own physical and emotional development.
- To foster self-esteem and a sense of moral responsibility.
- To encourage students to build relationships based on mutual respect.
- To recognise the sanctity of family life.
- To allow students to engage with and understand complex issues within the society in which they live, including an engagement with LGBT+ issues.
- To prepare students for the challenges of relationships and personal development within all aspects of life, including online.

Our teachers are aware that effective personal relationship education may lead to disclosure of a child protection issue and will rely on the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy to handle any such matter as confidentially as possible.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following guidance and policies:

DFE: 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health education 2020', PHSE policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and Anti-bullying policy.

Accepted by the Catholic Life of the School Committee 7th October 2020

Review Date: Autumn 2022

EDUCATION FOR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Rationale

At St Bernard's, education for personal relationships is part of a whole school approach to personal and social development and is guided by the values and teachings of the Catholic Church. The delivery of education for personal relationships is a continuous process, based on a planned, balanced and cross-curricular programme throughout the school and is placed in the context of and supported by the strong Catholic identity of the school itself and the mission statement that drives our school – particularly; 'each person is loved and valued', and 'uphold the Christian values of love, forgiveness and compassion'.

Our programme hopes to complement the role of the parents/guardians as their children develop into adulthood. The programme affirms our Catholic beliefs in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God. At the heart of Christian life is the belief in the Trinity; Father, Son and Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all of creation. In response to these beliefs, gender and sexuality are God's gift and reflect God's beauty, and the RSE policy is rooted in this core belief. RSE will be taught 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 from whatever household they come, and support will be offered to help pupils deal with differing sets of values. RSE provides opportunities to address the needs of our students with Christian perspectives in a world that may present different pressures and values.

Education for personal relationships involves the development of knowledge, skills and self-esteem which will enable our students to make well informed decisions. We recognise that relationship education is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the importance of stable and loving relationships, and about respect, love and care. We believe that sexual intimacy is best placed in the context of a loving marriage but recognise the challenges that today's society presents to this model. As such, our relationship education provides students with factual knowledge and an understanding of the influences on young people, encouraging them to be aware of the options open to them and to take charge of decisions about their own behaviour. It encourages the development of personal and interpersonal skills, the awareness and respect of self and others and encourages reflection and responsibility.

Statutory curriculum requirements

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the sex education part of the Education for Personal Relationships programme and alternative arrangements will be made for their children's supervision. The request to withdraw must be made in writing to the Headteacher. However, parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from the relationship or health education aspect of the programme, or the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under the National Curriculum for Science. Young people can choose for themselves to opt into sex education from three terms before their sixteenth birthday.

Objectives

We recognise the need for careful and sensitive teaching in all areas of education for personal relationships.

We aim to develop positives attitudes and values through:

- Promoting respect, value, love and care of themselves and others including respect for individual and cultural differences.
- Developing understanding and promoting sensitivity towards the needs and views of others and modelling appropriate behaviours.
- Discussing moral issues including concepts associated with right and wrong; encouraging responsibility for their own actions and promoting positive self-images.
- Developing self-esteem, confidence and self-respect as well as respect for others
- Exploring responsibility to the school, their family and the wider community.

Topics to be covered

RSE at St. Bernard's builds on the foundations of Relationships education our pupils will have received at their primary schools and on the age-appropriate sex education that they may have already received.

The Catholic nature of the school and the religious background of all pupils will be taken into account when planning teaching, so that those sensitive topics that need to be taught are appropriately handled. Teachers will be supported by the teacher guidance document in order to give confidence in teaching these topics within a Catholic school context.

Teaching will explain relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are covered so that pupils clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.

Pupils learn about:

Families

- Different types of committed, stable relationships and how these relationships contribute to happiness; their importance in bringing up children.
- What marriage is, its legal status, what rights and protections it offers and how the legal rights and protections differ between marriage and other types of long-term partnerships; why marriage should be entered into willingly.

Respectful relationships and friendships

- Characteristics of healthy relationships and friendship (including on-line, sexual and non-sexual relationships):
 - Trust, honesty, respect, kindness, generosity.
 - Respect of privacy, boundaries and consent or the lack of it.
 - Management of conflict, reconciliation and the ending of relationships of all types.
- Characteristics of unhealthy relationships and friendships:
 - How to distinguish whether other children or adults are trustworthy or even safe to be with.
 - To recognise unhealthy types of behaviour within relationships of their own or in others e.g. criminal behaviour, violent behaviour, coercive behaviour, sexual harassment or sexual violence.
 - How to seek advice and report concerns where necessary.
 - Being respectful of others however different they may be from themselves and not being led by stereotypes, which may be negative, unfair or destructive.
 - The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, particularly with regard to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Online and social media safety and harm

- That their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online and on social media do not differ from those experienced elsewhere and the same expectations of good behaviour apply and are expected.
- That sharing material on-line can be fraught with risk as sharers can disseminate material widely and much further than anticipated; that it may be extremely difficult to remove such on-line material and can cause much distress as a consequence.
- The impact of viewing harmful content on-line:
 - Particularly that sexually-explicit material can be very damaging to self-respect.
 - That viewing and sharing indecent images of children, including those viewed and shared by children, is a serious criminal offence carrying severe penalties.

Being safe

- The subjects and laws that relate to the age of sexual consent, consent beyond the age of consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse.
- About how people can be affected by such relationships.
- How to communicate and recognise consent from others, including in a sexual context. They also learn how and when such consent can be withdrawn.

Forced marriages, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation

- The subjects and laws that relate to forced marriage, honour based violence and female genital mutilation.
- About how people can be physically and emotionally affected by such practices and how to access support.

Intimate and sexual relationships, sexual health

- The nature of healthy one- to-one positive intimate relationships (mutual respect, loyalty, consent, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship).
- That choices made in relationships and friendships can affect health (physical, emotional, mental well-being, sexual and reproductive) in both a positive and a negative manner.
- That there are a range of strategies to identify and manage sexual pressure, including peer pressure; how to resist pressure and how not to pressure others.
- That they have a choice to delay sex or enjoy intimacy without sex.
- The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle choices on fertility in men and women.
- How the effects of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.
- The range of methods of contraception and their efficacies.
- The facts about pregnancy and miscarriage.
- The facts about abortion, adoption or keeping a baby with guidance in obtaining further help.
- The facts about sexually transmitted infections (STI) and HIV/AIDS; their prevalence; how they are transmitted; methods of treatment and prevention via safer sex; their potential impact on health.

Other topics

For health related topics in RSE, principally on health education, see aspects of the following school policies:

- ICT policies for E-safety and harm
- Food and Nutrition policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- PSHE Policy

Responsibility for the teaching of the programme

Responsibility for reviewing the lessons covering specific relationships, sex and health education programme lays with the Heads of Religious Education, Science and Heads of Year.

However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE programme in line with their responsibility to uphold the mission statement of the school. All tutors will be responsible for teaching their aspect of the PSHE curriculum. They will be role models for pupils of good, healthy, wholesome relationships. They will also be contributing to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.

PSHE Coordinator, Head of Science and Head of RE

The PSHE coordinator, along with the Headteacher, have 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 will be supported by the RE and Science departments in the provision of lesson content and/or overview of key topics.

Responsibilities of 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 along with a teacher guidance document to support the curriculum provision. All staff should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them.

It is important to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. 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 any member of staff, other children and young people or from parents, no matter what their own personal circumstance. This forms a central aspect of building the mission statement into teaching practice and pastoral care at St. Bernards.

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 responsibilities whilst they are in school delivering a session. Any visitor must adhere to appropriate codes of practice.

Health professionals should follow the school's policies, minimising the potential for disclosure 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; appropriate school leaders with responsibility for the quality of the RSE curriculum will be involved in arranging any external input and monitoring the quality of delivery.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Heads of Year will monitor the quality of provision of PSHE content in all year groups by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils' work. The same procedures for monitoring the quality of provision will be undertaken by the Heads of RE and Science in their respective department areas.

The programme will be evaluated regularly by means of questionnaires for pupils and staff. Oversight of the policy and teaching guidance will occur every two years by the Governors Catholic Life of the School committee. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy and maintaining the Catholic nature of the school as well as meeting statutory requirements.

Responsibilities of the Governing Body

- Regularly review 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 and practices, e.g., SEN, the ethos of the school and its Catholic beliefs;
- Ensure that parents know of their statutory rights;

- Establish a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including the resources used;
- Ensure that the policy and school practice provides proper and adequate coverage of RSE statutory requirements and guidance from the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

Responsibilities of the Headteacher

The Headteacher 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 Authority, along with any other appropriate agencies.

Teaching and learning guidance

To support this document, there is also a teacher guidance document which outlines the teaching methods used to deliver the content in the various subject areas, a curriculum map of where the RSE programme is taught and both the social and theological underpinnings of the programme. This allows all stakeholders to have confidence in the material that is covered and provides staff with a resource to support their teaching approach.

