

# St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School



## Policy on Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) for Catholic Schools

### Mission Statement

- *We are God's family, here to learn and try our best.*
- *God is at the heart of everything. Prayer is behind us in all that we do.*
- *We are called to serve others.*
- *We treat others with respect, as we would wish to be treated ourselves.*
- *We want everyone to be the best person they can be.*
- *We are all amazing in our own way.*
- *We look after the wonderful world that God created for us.*
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*'I have come that you might have life and have it to the full' John 10:10*

**Ratified by Governing Body September 19th 2024**

## Foreword from Bishop Richard Moth

**“The Church as a mother is under an obligation to provide for its children an education by virtue of which their whole lives may be inspired by the spirit of Christ.”<sup>1</sup>**

These words, from Decree of the Second Vatican Council on Education, speak of the motivation for our Catholic schools. Our schools are places where the relationship with Christ, to which all are called, enables those we educate to take their place in the Church and Society conscious of their dignity as children of God.

Our schools provide the “principal means of helping parents to fulfil their role in education.”<sup>2</sup> In entrusting their children to our schools, parents provide them with the best possible start in life, grounded in the deepening of their faith through prayer and the recognition of the presence of God in all things.

Our belief in the unique dignity of the human person as made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in our Catholic schools. To this end, RSE is rooted in the Catholic Church’s teaching of the human person and firmly embedded in the Religious Education framework as it is concerned primarily with nurturing the human wholeness of our pupils.

I am pleased to commend this RSE policy to you and am confident you will find it both invaluable and reassuring as you prepare for the new academic year.

With every Blessing,



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<sup>1</sup> VATICAN II, Declaration *Gravissimum Educationis* on Christian Education, n.3. (GE)

<sup>2</sup> Code of Canon Law, c. 796§1.

## **Mission**

In this policy, the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions about relationships and sex education (RSE). We set out our rationale for, and approach to relationships and sex education in the school.

The Policy is provided as a model by the Catholic Education Service, adapted for the context of St. Joseph's Epsom. Governors and Leaders ensure that it is current and is implemented.

## **Implementation and Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Head teacher, RSE coordinator, the Governing Body and Staff. The next review date is September 2025.

It is available on the school website for parents and carers to access or via the school office.

## **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 adults. This includes the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

## **Statutory 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.

'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.

### **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.

### **Aims of RSE and Our Mission Statement**

**All that we do at St Joseph's is shaped by our commitment to our Faith.** The choices we make and the expectations we nurture in our children emanate from a guiding desire to live our lives according to gospel values. In the words of our Mission Statement, written by the children:

- *We are God's family, here to learn and try our best.*
- *God is at the heart of everything. Prayer is behind us in all that we do.*
- *We are called to serve others.*
- *We treat others with respect, as we would wish to be treated ourselves.*
- *We want everyone to be the best person they can be.*
- *We are all amazing in our own way.*
- *We look after the wonderful world that God created for us.*

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, recognize the value of all persons and develop caring and sensitive attitudes.

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:

- reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility;
- respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in 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.

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, and how to love chastely;
- 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;

### **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.

### **Equality**

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.

### **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. Parents/carers will be informed 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 were consulted before this policy is ratified by the governors. 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. They will be able to view the resources used by the school in the RSE programme. Our aim is that 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 head teacher. 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 the Headteacher and the RE Leaders. 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. They will ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice.

### **Other Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Governors**

- ratify 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;
- 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 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.

#### **RSE Co-Ordinator**

The coordinator (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.

## **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.

## **Other 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.

## **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 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**

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 coordinator 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 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.