



RELATIONSHIPS, HEALTH AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENT (RHSE)

Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust

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PLEASE NOTE:

WHERE THIS POLICY REFERS TO 'HEADTEACHER' THIS INCLUDES EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHERS AND INTERIM/ACTING HEADTEACHERS.

This is a Trust-Wide Policy which applies to all academies within the Trust

Contents

TRUST CORE PRINCIPLES:	4
DEFINING RELATIONSHIPS, HEALTH AND SEX EDUCATION	4
RATIONALE	4
AIMS OF RHSE	5
INCLUSION AND DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING	6
EQUALITIES OBLIGATIONS	6

TRUST CORE PRINCIPLES:

- To Educate the whole person – we recognise that strong academic achievements enable our children and young people to successfully access their next steps in education, employment or training. We celebrate that each individual is made in God's image and has unique God-given talents to be recognised and harnessed.
- To aim for excellence in all that we do – from the quality of the curriculum, pathways and opportunities for pupils, to Trust financial security.
- By working together for the Common Good – whilst maintaining the distinctiveness of each school which serves its own unique community.

DEFINING RELATIONSHIPS, HEALTH 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 themselves as a sexual being, about what it means to be fully human, called to live in 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.” (DfE guidance, Relationships Education, 2021). This would include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

In Secondary schools Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RHSE) should “give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure).” (DfE guidance, Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education 2021).

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 Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RHSE) 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 relationships 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. RHSE, 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, RHSE will be firmly embedded in the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) framework as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils which seeks to form as well as inform young people in preparation for adult life. 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 RHSE in the schools in the Trust 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, regardless of background. It will also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

AIMS OF RHSE

All schools in the Trust are committed to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RHSE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, the schools in our Trust aim to 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.

In order for RHSE to be fully effective in our Trust, it needs to:

- Be faithful to the Church's vision of human wholeness whilst recognising the contemporary context in which we live today;
- Involve parents as they are primary educators of their child;
- Provide a positive view of human sexuality and dignity of the human person;
- Equip young people with the ability to make practical judgments about the right thing to do in particular circumstances;
- Explore and promote virtues which are essential to promoting respect and dignity;
- Be delivered in an age and stage appropriate way which reflects the development of the child;
- Be part of the cross-curricular work in both primary and secondary schools;
- Be sensitive to the needs of the individual pupil and recognise the mix of pupils with different sexual orientations, genders and family backgrounds in each class;
- Be taken seriously by governors and staff as an integrated part of the broad and balanced curriculum that our Catholic schools offer; including the moral and ethical elements of RHSE education;
- Be delivered by competent professionals who understand the Church's teaching.

INCLUSION AND DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING

We will ensure RHSE 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. (In looking at these questions, it is important to draw links to the school's inclusion/SEND policy).

EQUALITIES OBLIGATIONS

The Trust Directors and local governing bodies have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that each school in the Trust strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership, sex, or sexual orientation.

Parents are the first educators of their children. We work in partnership with parents and believe that they should have full knowledge of what is taught to their children when they are in our schools.

We expect all schools to consult, at least biennially, with parents regarding their RHSE curriculum and to keep them fully informed of any changes that are made through time.

We also expect all our schools to publish their RHSE curriculum online and allow parents to access any resources being used in lesson.

Training for RHSE

The CES and TenTen provide a six-part training course on RHSE, aimed at governors, school leaders, and teaching staff. Each module takes about 20 minutes to complete and information includes:

- RHSE in a Catholic context
- Statutory Guidance
- Policy and Governance
- The Role of Parents
- Model Curriculum
- Resources and External Visitors

We recommend senior leaders and governors complete this training, as well as any staff member delivering RHSE content. The course is free and can be accessed at: <https://rsetraining.catholiceducation.org.uk/>

Role of Local Governing Bodies

Ensuring high quality RHSE in the schools in our Trust is a core aspect of living out our Catholic ethos and values, whilst also preparing our pupils to live a fruitful and fulfilling life. As such, oversight of RSHE is an important role for governors.

School Policies

Each individual school should have an RHSE policy and this – including any updates - should be shared with the Diocese, as well as parents and staff.

Many of our schools use TenTen's 'Life to the Full' programme or 'A Journey in Love' scheme, both are recommended programmes of study for Catholic schools for Relationship, Health and Sex Education. They have been written to support the Religious Education, PSHE and Science curricula taught within the school, whilst also being compliant with statutory legislation, DfE and Ofsted requirements.

Particular care and consideration is taken to ensure that any resource held by a school in the Trust is age and stage appropriate. Whilst this is a matter for school leader and governor discernment, it is also important to consider the wider RHSE curriculum – sensitive issues are best explored together through a carefully planned and sequenced curriculum, with any texts used to support this, rather than left to pupil exploration without adult guidance and support.

This is particularly true for younger children, whose levels of maturity and development may mean it is not yet appropriate to use or share materials which can lead to confusion or misunderstandings, unless used in a planned and structured way. Parents should be made aware beforehand and given the opportunity to discuss any issues prior to use.

The same approach applies to speakers who a school in the Trust invites to addresses aspects of the RHSE curriculum. Whilst speakers can offer important insights and opportunities for learning, it is vital that appropriate research is undertaken by each school to ensure they are able to operate sensitively within the contexts of a Catholic school environment. To help with this, all schools should complete a CES due diligence checklist prior to issuing an invite and throughout the planning process.

Note:

The Trust is aware that the RSHE curriculum is currently undergoing review by the DfE, and we anticipate future guidance from the Bishops' Conference on relevant items relating to gender identity. We will update any guidance and share any changes that are made with our schools.