



Human Relationship and Sex Education Policy

St. Bernard's Catholic Primary School.

Vision and Mission.



Aims

Together as a family community we aim to shine and achieve. As a community we aim to

Love and value every individual

Seek to help everyone to be the best that they can be.

Keep God at the centre of all that we do.

Central to our aims is our school motto:

"You are precious in my eyes"

Within our Catholic school, each and every person is seen as made in God's image and loved by him. Jesus taught us to

- Love God
- Love each other

In line with this we aim to:

- ✓ Provide a caring, stimulating and secure environment in which our pupils can learn and grow.
- ✓ Establish a community where every member is respected and valued.
- ✓ Enable children to achieve their full potential in all areas of development.
- ✓ To teach and practice a moral code based upon gospel values that will prepare the children for life in today's society.
- ✓ Ensure that every child knows that they are loved by God and the school community.
- ✓ Foster the further development of home/school/parish links.
- ✓ Create a school environment where everyone is listened to and recognised as a unique individual who has a contribution to make to our school community.
- ✓ Be an inclusive and welcoming school that welcomes all pupils including those who are socially, academically, physically or emotionally disadvantaged

Procedures

The following groups have been consulted as part of producing this policy:

- Staff
- governing body
- Parents
- Parish

- Diocesan Education Service
- Wider community – school nurse team

All groups were provided with our initial draft policy and invited to make comments

In consultation with the Governing Body, this policy was first implemented in 2017, and subsequently reviewed every two years. The next review date is November 2026. In addition, this policy and our approach to teaching HRSE was reviewed and approved as part of the school's Section 48 RE inspection completed in October 2024.

The policy will be circulated to all members of the Governing Body and all members of staff. The school prospectus will contain a statement about HRSE teaching and details of where to obtain a full copy of the policy upon request. The Education Service will be sent a copy of the school's HRSE policy and it is the duty of the Governing Body to ensure that this is up to date.

Rationale

As a primary school in the Diocese of Lancaster Education Service, we use the term Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) as it believes that relationships education is about all aspects of growing a fulfilled and happy life, sexual education is a dimension of this greater whole. The defining belief of Christianity is that God took on human form. This endows the human form with an extraordinary dignity that goes beyond that of all other forms of life and shows that humanity alone can embrace this relationship with God. Therefore, our relationship with our own bodies is not casual but infused with the Holy Spirit. Any teaching about love and sexual relationships in school must be rooted in this belief which is expressed in the Church's teaching about relationships, marriage, sex and family life. The Church offers education to young people as it is part of complete human formation. Education about human love is no less a part of a Catholic school's responsibility than teaching about mathematics or English. At St. Bernard's school we teach young people about how to form relationships, including understanding loving relationships and acknowledging that children's first experience of love is in the home. We encourage children from the earliest age to recognise that they are all children of God and that each person shares a God given dignity. As children mature, we encourage them to follow the example of Jesus and live lives inspired by the Gospel virtues, enabling them to follow His commandment to "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31). This is the basis for all relationships in our school. Teaching about relationships in our schools is supported by Christian virtue teaching as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and in line with 'Fit for Mission? Schools'.

The Department for Education (2000) suggests that sex and relationship education should build on the children's own experiences, be sensitive to the specific domestic contexts the children come from, form attitudes and values towards relationships, develop personal and social skills and increase the knowledge and understanding of each young person as they grow about their relationships and wellbeing, including sexual health. The Diocese of Lancaster supports all these aims in educating about relationships and sex education though recognises that the Church's objectives in this are about complete human formation.

Statutory framework

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. The new statutory framework replaces Statutory Guidance: 'Sex and Relationships Education Guidance' (2000). The DfE states that it intends to update the

guidance every three years from the first required teaching (September 2020). The statutory guidance is available from the DfE (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>). It should be read in conjunction with this Diocesan guidance and the following documents.

- The National Curriculum (2014)
- The Children's Act (2004)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)
- Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool (a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils)
- Equality Act 2010 and schools
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance)
- Alternative Provision (statutory guidance)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (advice for schools)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (advice for schools, including advice on cyberbullying)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools (advice for schools)
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools (guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC))
- SMSC requirements for independent schools (guidance for independent schools on how they should support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development).
- National Citizen Service guidance for schools
- Additionally, non-statutory guidance directs policy and guides the work of OFSTED as it seeks to promote what is perceived as best practice, which may go beyond the limits of statute.

Virtues and Values

Gospel virtues and values underpin the HRSE curriculum. The Christian tradition describes behaviours or habits that lead to happiness, human flourishing and a closer relationship with God as virtues. These virtues are described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and fall into two groups. The theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (sometimes love is used instead) are about developing the habits of being open to the work of the Holy Spirit and developing a deeper relationship with God through living a balanced and happy, good life. The cardinal virtues of practical wisdom (prudence), justice, fortitude and temperance help people develop habits of reason, fairness, emotional resilience and self-mastery. They are human virtues and, as such, are part of the development of people of all faiths or none as they learn how to flourish, thrive and to have a life supported by strong and caring relationships. The cardinal virtues are drawn from the teachings of Plato and Aristotle and are held in common with people of many faiths and secular beliefs. St. Thomas Aquinas attributes the theological virtues as having their foundation in God, they complete the cardinal virtues and are the way people can reach "the abundant life" (John 10:10).

At St. Bernard's School we live out the Gospel values shared in the Beatitudes, throughout the life of school by:

- Keeping Christ at the centre of all that we do.
- Ensuring forgiveness is deeply rooted in all our behaviour systems

- Staff modelling Gospel values and virtues through their interactions with children, staff, parents and other adults.
- Promoting Gospel Values through weekly Gospel Value Badge awards.
- Wearing our St. Bernard's Badge with pride and remembering that wearing it means that we need to behave in certain ways – following in the footsteps of Jesus.
- Children are encouraged to say thank you to God, happy and cheerful to care about other people and know how Jesus cared for others and think about their behaviour
- Children are encouraged to evaluate their behaviour and give reasons for the choices they have made?
- As pupils progress through Key Stage Two they will develop a deeper understanding of what is moral behaviour and be able to say why this is important for personal happiness and for a closer relationship with God.

In addition to the points made above, they are given opportunities to learn how prayer enables them to make space for God in their lives and offers opportunities for reflection and growth?

By the end of Year 6, children should be able to explain some behaviour choices by reference to their beliefs and values, for example, by referring to Jesus' teaching about forgiveness.

The Aim and Objectives of HRSE.

The aim of HRSE is part of our aim to educate the complete human person. This is expressed in Fit for mission? Schools (2009).

The fundamental needs of the human person are the focus of Catholic education – intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual, and eschatological (Our eternal destiny). These fundamental needs can only be truly fulfilled through a rich and living encounter with the deepest truths about God and the human person.

This is why Christ and His Gospel must be the foundation of the educational project of each school and college, because He is 'the perfect Man in whom all human values find their fullest perfection' (Congregation for Catholic Education, The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School). Therefore, the Catholic school or college is called to keep the Gospel whole and alive amongst pupils, families, and staff.

HRSE should deepen the following areas of understanding.

- To develop self-respect and love of self.
- To invite young people to develop and deepen a loving relationship with God.
- To invite young people to understand that their life has a purpose.
- To invite young people to develop and deepen relationships with each other based on mutual respect and care and to understand this can be an expression of God's love.
- To foster an understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church about how to live a full life, a life of virtue, and the place of human sexuality in living a full life, marriage and parenthood
- A strong awareness of their own safety and the nature of consent.
- To have an understanding of the law in England about Equality and Marriage, appropriate to age and maturity.

- We will seek to develop attitudes of awe and wonder for the gift and beauty of self, respect for each other as children of God and rejoice in the goodness of God's creation.
- We will seek to develop attitudes of responsibility towards ourselves and others, recognising the dignity in all.
- We will seek to enable children to understand the choices they make and how they can help or harm themselves and others.
- We will encourage children to learn about expressing their own emotions and being respectful of the emotions and behaviours of others.
- We will encourage the whole school to be like a loving family recognising God as a merciful and generous father as Jesus taught in the Lord's prayer.
- We will encourage everyone in the school to recognise their part in the school family and work together for reconciliation when relationships in the school falter.
- We will encourage everyone in the school to value humility, mercy and compassion and to respond with empathy to the problems of others.
- We will develop children's knowledge of when to say 'no' to behaviours or attitudes that harm their dignity or the dignity of others and to be responsible for their own safety.
- We will develop children's experience of what it is to be happy so that they begin to understand the difference between happiness and gratification and value patience.
- We will teach children about the media and their choices, about what to watch, what games to play, what rules apply and that the dignity of all does not just apply to people who are physically seen, it applies to online relationships too.
- We will support children when relationships in their lives are challenging and teach them that there are people in school who will listen if they are experiencing changes that make them frightened or uncomfortable.
- We will foster an atmosphere in school which celebrates the work of the Trinity through the life of the school and its relationship with the Church.
- We will teach children about the beauty of the Church's teaching about love and God's love for them which is shared in the Sacraments.
- We will sensitively share the Church's teaching about the importance of marriage and family life as a way to live in loving relationships with others and with God.

Inclusion

At St. Bernard's we identify that young people mature in different ways. Our teaching about relationships and sexuality is respectful of each child's starting point, their faith, culture and sexual orientation. Lessons are framed by this understanding and young people encouraged to respect difference and develop and approach of dialogue. Through our school nurture team, we would offer support to young people who require or request additional support, for example, transgender pupils.

Equality

The governing body has wide obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to ensure that St. Bernard's Catholic School endeavours to do its best for all of the pupils, irrespective of ability (physical and mental), race, ethnicity, nationality, maternity, pregnancy, sex, gender identity or orientation or whether they are looked after children. For further information please see our single equalities policy.

Programme of study

In 2024 the school made the decision to implement the Ten Ten “Life to the Full plus” programme of study to support the teaching of HRSE and PSHE. This framework is supported and promoted by both the Diocese of Lancaster and the Department for Education. The Ten Ten scheme ensures all teaching is underpinned with a Christian faith understanding that our deepest identity is as a child of God – created, chosen and loved by God. The programme is fully inclusive of all pupils and their families. The choice in using “Life to the Full **plus**” additionally ensures continuity and coverage across the whole PSHE curriculum

The Ten Ten “Life to the Full Plus” schemes ensures HRSE will be taught with a spiral approach to learning in which pupils will revisit the same topics at an age-appropriate stage through their school life. Children will be taught clear ground rules for discussions and parents will be informed of teaching of possible sensitive subjects. The programme includes teaching about personal health, physical and emotional well-being, strong emotions, private parts of the body, personal relationships, family structures, trusted adults, growing bodies, puberty, periods, life cycles, the dangers of social media, where babies come from, an understanding of the Common Good and living in the wider world.

The HRSE Co-ordinator 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.

Children’s well-being will be developed and monitored through a positive behaviour policy and/or encouraging children to be responsible for the choices they make.

Parents/Carers

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children. The school should support parents in this task. The role of the school should be that of assisting and completing the work of parents, furnishing children and adolescents with an evaluation of “sexuality as value and task of the whole person, created male and female in the image of God”. (Educational Guidance in Human Love (1983) Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education n69) Children’s first experience of relationships and love are in the home. At our schools we seek to work with parents and support them as their children grow and begin to develop their own character as well as experiencing changes in their physical appearance.

Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of HRSE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children’s learning.

Parents/carers 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.

Teaching HRSE

HRSE will be taught at an age-appropriate level by the class teachers and support staff in every year group mostly as discrete lessons throughout the school year. Staff will be supported by other agencies, including the school nurse, pastoral staff and Ten Ten company.

All staff are involved in fostering attitudes, living Gospel virtues and shaping behaviour based on a Christian understanding of how to lead a good life. Staff are called to be role models of the school's ethos in their relationships with other staff members, their conduct towards parents and their care for the children in the school. Staff who are not Catholic themselves must conduct their behaviour in school in accordance with the vision and mission of the school.

Teaching and learning about human relationships will be part of the life of the school. However, the programme of study will be taught through cross-curricular dimensions where appropriate, such as R.E, science and computing.

Sometimes, the children's learning will be best supported by using other agencies, such as the school nurse, or other visitors to school. Such visitors will be guided to read the protocol for visitors at St. Bernard's School and agree to follow its instruction.

Supporting children and young people deemed to be at risk

Sensitive subjects in HRSE always need to be framed so that the young people who are participating know that there is pastoral support if any of the issues discussed make them feel the need to talk further or share confidential information. This should always be done within the safeguarding framework of the school and it is paramount that all staff teaching HRSE have up-to-date safeguarding professional development. Questions asked by students that are a cause for concern for the teacher, for example because of their explicit or graphic content, should be addressed in accordance with the school's safeguarding policy and confidentiality procedures. Copies of these can be obtained through contacting the school business manager.

Reviewed Full Governors Board November 2024