



Relationship and Sex Education Policy

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Mission Statement

Our Mission is to educate the young people entrusted to our care in the Catholic, Christian way that ensures that each one is valued and cared for and achieves the best of which he or she is capable.

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education and growth of the whole person (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education.

Definition

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) at St Mary's both informs and draws upon the existing knowledge provided by parents, carers and where appropriate, other schools that our pupils have previously attended. Our RSE is a response to the challenge of our school Mission Statement. It involves growth, support, collaboration and is based upon our belief in the demands and joys of the Gospel.

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions about RSE at St Mary's.

Introduction

As a Catholic school, St Mary's believes that all its pupils are created by God and in the image of God. As such, Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) is undertaken in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church, aiming to educate the whole child.

We acknowledge that pupils will have different maturation rates, and different levels of sexual awareness. We recognise the importance that SRE can play in contributing to the development of healthy young people, enabling them to make prudent judgements about sexual health and relationships. Therefore we seek to develop in our pupils the understanding, sensitivity, skills and attitudes which will allow them to manage their relationships in a responsible and healthy way.

All staff at St Mary's are regularly trained to recognise and respond to safeguarding issues. Should the SRE programme identify any concerns regarding pupil welfare, then procedures as highlighted in the school's Safeguarding policy will be followed

Aims

- The key aim of the SRE programme at St Mary's is to provide a teaching based on the Roman Catholic understanding of the human person and an appreciation that authentic human love is more than sexual expression.
- Furthermore, we aim to:
- Support parents in their role as 'the first and best educators of their children' (Gravissimum Educationis, para 7)
- Enable young people to understand and feel confident about the physical and emotional changes which take place during the course of their lives
- Offer a programme of SRE which will be positive and highlight the moral values of the Catholic Church, enabling pupils to articulate Catholic values in the challenges of the modern world
- Explore the meaning and value of life and appreciate the preciousness of God's gift of life
- Promote appreciation of the values of family life
- Enable pupils to reflect on their relationships and recognise the qualities that help relationships grow and develop positively
- Provide a forum where pupils can share their concerns and offer a climate of support where they know they will be listened to sensitively

- Disseminate the correct information in a manner relevant to the age and stage of development of the pupils
- Encourage pupils to make informed choices and responsible decisions by encouraging them to explore their own attitudes, values and emotions, and those of others

Objectives

Following the Guidance of the DfEE (2000), our objectives are divided into three key areas:

1. Attitudes

- Respect and reverence for the gift of human sexuality, fertility and creation
- Respect for the dignity of every human being
- Valuing themselves and seeing the good in others
- Responsibility for their own actions and recognising the impact on others
- Celebrating the gift of life-long love
- Recognition of the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life
- Faithfulness in relationships

2. Personal and social skills

- Make sound judgements and good choices
- The ability to form friendships and loving, stable relationships free from pressure, exploitation, bullying and abuse.
- Manage emotions within relationships, and when relationships break down, with confidence, sensitivity and dignity.
- Manage conflict positively and maturely.
- Develop self-esteem and confidence.
- Demonstrate empathy and sensitivity to others.
- Build resilience and the ability to resist unwanted pressures (media, internet, peer groups).
- Assess risks and manage behaviour in order to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity and dignity.

3. Knowledge and understanding

- The human body and the changes that puberty brings
- Facts about human reproduction; sexual love and procreation
- The Church's teaching on relationships and the nature and meaning of sexual love
- The Church's teaching on marriage and family life

- Methods of family planning and the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception
- The Church's teaching on abortion
- The Church's teaching on homosexual relationships
- How to keep themselves free from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unwanted pregnancy
- Where to go for advice and support
- Aspects of the law relating to age of consent, forced-marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion.
- Different viewpoints relating to issues in RSE.

Our Programme: RSE in Partnership

Parents

RSE at St Mary's recognises that parents are the first and best educators of their children and that the school works in partnership with them. They have the right to be consulted before a RSE programme is embarked upon. Information on the programme will be made available to parents and the right to withdraw their children from SRE is respected, excepting those elements which are required by the National Curriculum for Science. Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the Headteacher.

Governing Body

Governors have a responsibility for ensuring that there is a RSE policy which is in keeping with Catholic teaching. They will ensure that the policy is available to parents and that parents know of their right to withdraw their children. Governors will ensure that the programme and teaching materials are monitored and evaluated.

Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, Parents, Liverpool Archdiocese and Lancashire County Council.

PSHCEE Co-ordinator

Much of the RSE programme is delivered within the RE curriculum, as well as within PSHCEE lessons, assemblies and Super Learning Days. The Assistant Head Teacher responsible for PSHCEE 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. Regular meetings with the RE Curriculum leader also take place to ensure that the content covered is in line with Catholic teaching. They will also be supported by the Curriculum Deputy Headteacher and the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Child Protection.

A cross-curricular approach

At St Mary's RSE is a whole school issue. All teachers have a responsibility of care and should contribute to the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of their pupils. Teachers will be expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic ethos at St Mary's. They will teach the RSE curriculum as detailed in the schemes of work for PSHCEE, RE and Science. All departments will be audited biannually, consulted and asked to participate in monitoring and evaluating SRE.

Teaching Strategies

Teachers will establish clear ground rules to create a safe environment. For example, no one will have to answer a personal question or no one will be forced to take part in a discussion etc. Teachers will use distancing techniques such as depersonalising discussions to avoid embarrassment and protect privacy. Teachers will establish clear parameters for dealing with questions. If a question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupil of the ground rules. If a question is too explicit or inappropriate for the age range of the class, the teacher should acknowledge it and attend to it later on an individual basis.

Reflection points are crucial for learning as they encourage pupils to consolidate what they have learned and to form new understanding, skills and attitudes. PSHCEE units of work end with a lesson of reflection and an opportunity to establish how much progress and learning has taken place for each pupil.

External Visitors/Agencies

On occasion, help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists will be invited to deliver aspects of RSE. These visits will complement and enhance the current RSE programme. External visitors will be made clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in school delivering a session. They will ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles.

Safeguarding and Confidentiality

Staff are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a Safeguarding issue. If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse, they should immediately follow the school's Safeguarding procedures.

In the event of a disclosure pupils will be reassured that their best interests will be maintained. Pupils will be reminded that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. If confidentiality has to be broken, pupils will be informed first and then supported as appropriate.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The PSHCEE Co-ordinator will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the RSE programme by examining schemes of work, lesson plans and samples of pupil work. Evaluation of the entire provision for RSE will take place through questionnaires / response sheets and by discussion with pupils, staff and parents. The results of the evaluation will be reported to the SLT and Governors. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

Defining Relationship and Sex Education

DFE Guidance defines RSE 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” (Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfEE, 2000). 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. The DfEE identifies three main elements:

- Attitudes and values
- Personal and social skills
- Knowledge and understanding