

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Worcester

'Following Jesus in all we do'

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

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St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Worcester
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Love and Relationship Education Policy Statement

Mission Statement

"We demonstrate our commitment to working as a learning community by following Jesus in all we do and giving of our best in all things. We believe that each child will succeed through experiencing quality opportunities to grow closer to God through Prayer and Worship in a stimulating learning environment where love and care is shown for everyone and everything, through sharing fully in the Catholic life of the school and beyond."

Introduction and Rationale

This policy has been produced in response to local Worcestershire developments, and links to Catholic Life within the Section 48 Framework, our SMVSC (Social Moral Vocational Spiritual Curriculum), and local CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) documentation. Our policy is also based upon the Birmingham Diocese model RSE policy, and we reserve the right to teach RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education) according to our policy, as a faith school under DfE (Department for Education) guidance. This policy has been approved by the foundation governors of St Joseph's School and is taught and adhered to in accordance with the trustees of the Birmingham Diocese.

Sexuality is God's gift to us. Pope John stated that, "sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person – body, emotion and soul – and manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love". In 1987 the Bishops Conference of England and Wales recommended that all Catholic schools review their "Education in Personal Relationships" programmes to ensure that their pupils were given positive guidance in sex education. They gave schools the duty and obligation to educate pupils to an understanding, appropriate to their age, of the processes involved in their physical and moral development and how that development should be tempered by the Church's moral teaching. In short, their understanding of themselves and their relationships with others should develop positively as they grow in maturity. The school's responsibility was thus placed side-by-side with that of the parents, the first educators of children in the areas of moral education and sexual development.

'Man and woman have been created, which is to say willed by God: 'Being man' or 'being woman' is a reality which is good and willed by God: Man and woman possess an inalienable dignity which comes to them immediately from God their creator"

(The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Para. 369)

The role of the Catholic School will be the result of reflection on the Gospels and the teaching of the Church and statutory guidance. There are several important concepts which underpin our provision in this area:

- the dignity and worth of each person made in the image of God
- the importance of individuals coming together in mutual respect and support
- to live and work for the good of humankind and the glory of God
- 'the importance of marriage and family life, in a stable and loving relationships, which is underpinned by respect, love and care' (A Model Policy for Relationships and Sex Education)

Our response to Government initiatives on RSE is:

- positive and prudent
- guided by our vision of what it means to be human and our claims to educate the whole person
- able and ready to address issues raised by the actual experience of pupils today

Our pupils are involved in Love and Relationship Education precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and the human person:

- God is community - a Trinity of Love
- 'at the heart of Christian life is the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation' (A Model Policy for Relationships and Sex Education)
- we are made in God's image, Jesus is 'Word-made-flesh', all flesh is holy
- Jesus' command to love is the basis of all Christian morality
- 'education in personal relationships (RSE) prepares pupils for the next stage of their physical, emotional and spiritual development' (Section 48 framework)

- ‘gender and sexuality are seen as God’s gift, reflecting God’s beauty, and are to be shared in divine creativity’
(A Model Policy for Relationships and Sex Education)

Aim

Our school seeks to provide a family life, love and relationships education programme that helps pupils to live now and in the future within the principles of Catholic moral teaching, especially with regard to their own dignity, and that of others, as human beings.

‘Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, (should) have an excellent understanding of loving relationships and sexual development within the context of a Christian understanding of the purpose of sexual love...as a result, they (should be) happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth.’

(Section 48 Framework, DBES, Jan 2018)

We also strive to educate our families about healthy relationships:

*‘Healthy relationships involve honesty, trust, mutual respect and open communication...
(they) should make you feel good about yourself.’*

(Healthy relationships, WSCB, Sept 2016)

Objective

The key objective is to provide a teaching and learning programme designed to:

- support the personal, physical, emotional and social development of all pupils
- enable pupils to understand that they were made by God to love and to be loved, and that love is central to all meaningful relationships
- help pupils to gain a knowledge and understanding of the values of family life and marriage
- enable pupils to have an understanding of their physical and emotional development as they grow and change, complementing the education that is being given at home while recognising that pupils come from different backgrounds and have different levels of support from their families
- explain the process of human reproduction appropriate to the age of the pupils and in line with the requirements of the National Curriculum
- offer pupils a Catholic framework to help them make informed decisions
- Ensure parents and pupils are aware of the dangers of CSE
- Ensure parents and pupils are aware of the dangers surrounding online relationships

Role of the pupil

Pupils should be willing to listen to the teachings of the Church and become aware of the variety of other views regarding moral issues related to RSE. They should have a positive attitude and sense of responsibility regarding their own and others’ sexuality. It is hoped that pupils will have a sense of self-esteem that enables them to enjoy relationships based on mutual respect, dignity and responsibility. Our supportive school ethos encourages children to feel safe and to talk about their feelings to:

- reduce isolation in the emotions they experience
- relieve tension by enabling children to talk and be listened to
- provide an opportunity to develop an appropriate vocabulary
- allow children to perceive situations more clearly for planning an action or change
- make children feel protected by a culture which actively promotes a ‘listening environment’ and challenges unacceptable practice

(Healthy relationships, WSCB, Sept 2016)

Role of the school and staff

Our school Governors, the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) and SMT (Senior Management Team) will manage and monitor our love and relationships policy. St Joseph’s SLT and SMT will also provide training on love and relationships, as well as CSE, for staff to enable them to support and offer guidance to individual pupils who seek it. ‘Where a teacher suspects that a pupil is victim of or at risk of abuse they are required to follow the school’s safeguarding policy and immediately inform’ the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) or a DDSL (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) (A Model Policy for Relationships and Sex Education).

It is also the responsibility of the SLT and RE Coordinator to ensure all staff delivering the love and relationships curriculum are confident in doing so. Training will be provided for all staff on CSE by the safeguarding team, and

further love and relationships curriculum training will be provided by the RE Lead for new members of staff as part of their induction program. This training will be revisited with all teachers as and when necessary. Advice will be given to teachers on how to apply the glossary of terms provided in the McCrimmons developmental programme 'A Journey in Love', when addressing questions posed by pupils. Teachers will use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individuals, depending on the age of pupils, to apply these glossary of terms within lessons.

Working with parents

St Joseph's places great value in its working relationships with parents. The partnership between school and parents is essential in all areas of the curriculum and school life. The Catholic Church, and St Joseph's Catholic School, are here to 'assist parents and carers in educating their children' (A Model Policy for Relationships and Sex Education). Therefore, as a school and parish community, we will support parents and carers by providing material to share with their children at home if requested. The love and relationships programme is developmental in nature; as children progress through the school, the issues / areas taught do become more delicate in nature. Section 241 of the Education Act 1993 gives parents the right to withdraw their children from any elements of the school's sex education programme, with the exception of those elements which are required by the National Curriculum Orders. This right will be respected and no sex education outside those areas stipulated by the National Curriculum orders will be taught without the prior consent of parents. Staff will always share any curriculum coverage on a termly basis as is policy. Upper Key Stage Two parents will receive regular correspondence, via letter, with regard to the love and relationships lessons. If appropriate or necessary, parents will be invited to school to discuss the content of the curriculum and how it will be delivered. They will be able to comment on any aspects of the programme and will be given an outline of the course their child will be following.

While the right to confidentiality of the individual is respected as far as possible, the rights and responsibilities of parents and legal guardians will be equally regarded. The School will always remain true to the moral, pastoral and social teaching of the Catholic Church. However, the School will always work pastorally with and respect the families (parents and pupils) in a supportive and reconciliatory way, even if their approach seems at odds with the church's view. While remaining true to its distinctive foundation, the school will always respect the genuine moral and faith values of each pupil and their families even when things appear to go wrong.

The annual programme of study for family life, love and relationships education

This will be taught within the framework of the strategy, but will draw upon other areas of the curriculum in order to enrich pupil's learning. For example, the study of nature in science will lead naturally to a discussion about concepts such as reproduction and growth. Teachers will link the programme to the work they are following in other subjects as opportunities arise and they will also respond to pupils' questions on matters to do with family life, love and relationships education in a way that is guided by their professional experience and their commitment to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The order in which units relating to love and relationships are taught will depend on the RE unit plan for that particular year group. As pupils grow older and mature they will be encouraged to ask more searching questions. Teachers will also receive support on knowing when to defer questions to the safeguarding leads and parents. Question boxes will be used to collect any questions, at the end of lessons, to enable teachers to respond appropriately and to defer questions appropriately. Teachers will seek to answer these honestly and within the moral teaching of the Church, using the correct vocabulary where appropriate.

The programme, being cross curricular, will not appear as a discrete subject but will be part of the Religious Education, Science and PSHE (Physical Social Health Education) and Citizenship framework, particularly in Upper Key Stage 2. The programme will extend throughout all years in the school and at each stage will be attuned to the respective needs and capabilities of the various age ranges. It will pay due regard to the special needs of both boys and girls respectively.

CSE and Online Safety

Child Sexual Exploitation has become a growing and serious concern and is recognised as a form of child sexual abuse. As part of the love and relationships policy we recognise this concern and we are committed to protecting and supporting the school community and working with partner agencies to achieve this. The love and relationships policy falls within the established Child Protection and Safeguarding framework that is already in place in school. At St Joseph's we strive to support and teach students about how to make positive choices and informed decisions in their relationships, so that they develop awareness and can protect themselves from all potential forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. As a school we promote healthy friendships and relationships through the school ethos, school policies, student-staff relationships and, of course, the love and relationships curriculum. An awareness of the risk factors, and signs and indicators of CSE are key for all staff to be aware of. During whole school bi-annual safeguarding training, all staff are informed of the CSE identification tool, and how to access support and provide guidance for those affected by CSE. Our

love and relationships curriculum includes a consistent ‘whole school approach’ (Healthy relationships, WSCB, Sept 2016) to educating staff, parents and pupils about CSE. We feel using a ‘whole school approach’ is especially important as we strive to deliver a high ‘quality of pastoral care to all members of the community, both pupils and staff.’ (Section 48 Framework)

Annually Upper KS2 (Years 5 and 6) will be educated on CSE. A lesson will be dedicated to support pupils in their understanding and awareness of CSE. A workshop will be held for children, which will be led by the same expert from the local police service, to ensure our RSE programme is ‘consistently well taught and celebrates Catholic teachings and principles’ (Section 48 Framework). In addition to this strategy, the NSPCC assemblies will be held bi-annually for KS1 and KS2 pupils based on the ‘Speak out and Stay Safe’ campaign which promotes children’s awareness of their own personal safety. For more information on CSE, and the training held for staff, please refer to our safeguarding policy.

The love and relationships curriculum has been updated to include material on how to deal with online relationships with regards to keeping safe. As technology is increasingly used by children at home and school, it is of utmost importance to ensure children know the dangers and are able to safeguard themselves against online relationships. Internet safety sessions are now embedded in our computing curriculum and will be further strengthened by the implementation of the ‘National Online Safety platform’ led by the DSL for Online Safety.

Resources

As well as being taught within the *Diocesan Curriculum Strategy for RE*, ‘*Learning and Growing as the People of God*’ the *McCrimmons developmental programme ‘A Journey in Love*’ will provide the main strategies and units of coverage for each year group. Please see: Healthy relationships, WSCB, Sept 2016, for further resources which might be used to support the CSE sessions. All resources used will be adapted to the needs of our Catholic primary students, and are the responsibility of the governing body and SLT of St Joseph’s School. All resources have been shared and presented to the Birmingham Diocese for approval and advice. Any adaptations to these resources will be shared with the diocese and governing body, to be monitored by the governors of the school and implemented by the SLT.

Special Educational Needs

Teachers recognise the sensitive nature of this subject and will plan the programme in different ways to meet the individual needs of the children, bearing in mind the age and maturity of the children. In addition to whole school/class love and relationships and CSE sessions, extra support may be given to specific individuals and groups who are at heightened risk of exploitation or particular vulnerability (Healthy relationships, WSCB, Sept 2016).

Assessment and Marking

Assessment of the subject is mainly through discussion (formal and informal), but other methods of assessment are used by the class teacher, particularly when assessing scientific knowledge. Teachers are not expected to mark the love and relationships units of study in RE books, but if they find misconceptions they must verbally address these with individual pupils to avoid social misunderstandings. All science based tasks will be completed and marked in the pupils’ science books.

Monitoring and Review

Family Life, love and relationships education is monitored by the RE Lead and Senior Curriculum Lead, and forms part of the termly report to governors. This report may focus on a specific theme of the Love and Relationships curriculum (when appropriate) and may include questionnaires, evidence of pupils’ work, interviews and discussions with parties involved. The Governors Scrutiny Sub-Committee gives serious consideration to any comments from parents and teachers and modification to the policy is made as necessary. A link governor will also be assigned to monitor the love and relationships curriculum. The Governing Body remain ultimately responsible for the love and relationships policy. Any adaptations to the curriculum or policy will be shared and presented to the Birmingham Diocese for approval and advice, and then monitored by the governors of the school.

Appendix

1. RE unit themes and links to Love & Relationships curriculum

Linked documents

- **Audit Tool for Catholic Primary RSE Curriculum**
- **A Model Policy for Relationships and Sex Education**
- **Section 48 framework**

- **Healthy Relationships – a Whole School Approach, Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board, Sept 2016**
- **St Joseph's Safeguarding Policy September 2021**