RSE Policy

St. Richard's Catholic Primary School

'To use our gifts from God to help others and to bring joy and peace to our world. We will do this by using our Gospel Values of Love, Honesty, Hope, Kindness, Forgiveness and Respect.'

Review - September 2025

RSE Policy

School Mission Statement

Our school mission is *'To use our gifts from God to help others and to bring joy and peace to our world.'*

The Gospel Values we live by to achieve this are:

- Love
- Forgiveness
- Honesty
- Hope
- Kindness
- Respect

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.

Consultation

In devising this policy we have consulted with the following groups:

- review of RSE curriculum content with staff and pupils
- consultation with wider school community e.g. school nurse
- consultation with school Governing Committee, including the Parish Priest

Implementation and Review of Policy will take place after consultation with the Governors in term 5 2023. This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Executive Principal, RSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and Staff.

The next review date is September 2025

Dissemination

The policy will be given to all members of the Governing Committee, and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the document will be available to all parents through the school's website. Details of the content of the RSE curriculum will also be published on the school's web site.

Defining Relationship and Sex Education

'*Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes in all things, endures all things*.' (1 Corinthians 13.7)

The 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"[1]. It is about the development of the pupil's knowledge and understanding of her or him, 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 DFE identifies three main elements: "attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding"[2].

Statutory Curriculum Requirements

[1] Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfEE, 2000

[2] ibid

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.

Rationale

'*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 and support will be provided to help pupils deal with different sets of values.

This policy has been developed in accordance with *Education in Human Love*, the Diocesan Policy for Relationship & Sex Education (Archdiocese of Southwark, June 2016).

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 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.

Aim of RSE and the Mission Statement

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 Learning Values state that we will help pupils to:

- work together towards shared goals and aspirations in a secure and supportive environment
- think for themselves in order to create new knowledge and to develop the confidence to solve problems

- make a success of their lives by increasing their capacity for effective thought and then harnessing its power
- appreciate that they are on a personal journey where everyday experience contributes to valuing themselves and others, and reaffirms the meaning of their lives
- 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'[3] 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 the person of 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;

[3] Gravissimum Educationis 1

- 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 are the clay, you are the potter, we are all the work of your hands*.' (Isaiah, 6.4 – 8)

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.

Equalities Obligations

The Governing Committee 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.

Broad Content of RSE

Three aspects of RSE - attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills will be provided in three inter-related ways: the whole school / ethos dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific relationships and sex curriculum. Our programme is based on '*A Journey in Love'* (published by McCrimmons) and covers:

- RECEPTION – The wonder of being special and unique
- YEAR ONE - We meet God's love in our family
- YEAR TWO - We meet God's love in the community
- YEAR THREE - How we live in hope
- YEAR FOUR - God loves us in our differences
- YEAR FIVE - Gods loves us in our changing and developing
- YEAR SIX - The wonder of God's love in creating new life

Programme/Resources

Appendices to this policy provide further information about the programme and associated resources.

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- experiential
- active
- brainstorming
- film & video
- group work
- role-play

- trigger drawings
- values clarification
- (See also 'Sex and Relationship Guidance '. DCSF 2000 for more detail)

Parents and Carers

'*The very act of parenting calls the parents to be the primary educators*.' (Pope Francis)

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. Therefore, the school will support parents and carers by informing them through an annual meeting 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 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 has full confidence in the school's RSE programme to meet their child's needs.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RSE 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 in writing. 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.

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 Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the RE Lead.

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 support aspects of RSE. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher led sessions. It is important that any external visitor is clear about

their role and responsibility whilst they are in school supporting a session. Any visitor must adhere to our code of practice developed in line with Diocesan guidelines[4].

Health professionals should follow the school's policies, minimising the potential for disclosures or inappropriate comments using negotiated ground rules and distancing techniques as other teachers would. They will ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice.

Other Roles and Responsibilities Regarding RSE

Governing Committee Members

- Draw up the RSE policy, in consultation with the Headteacher, RE leads, 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;
- Establish a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used;
- Ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHE.

The Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team 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.

RE Lead and SLT

The co-ordinators and the SLT have a 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.

Relationship to Other Policies and Curriculum Subjects

This RSE policy is to be delivered as part of the school's PSHE provision. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents (for example, Behaviour and Anti-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.

[4] Guidance on Visitors and External Speakers Working with Pupils in Catholic Schools in the Diocese (Education Commission, Catholic Diocese of Southwark, September 2015)

Teaching methods will be adapted to meet the varying needs of this group of pupils. Learning about RSE in PSHE classes will link to/complement learning in those areas identified in the RSE audit.

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 Governing Committee members 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. (See also Sex and Relationship Guidance, 4.5 'Dealing with questions' 0116/2000, Department for Education and Employment, July 2000 for more detail).

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 and Young 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 and Advice

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 approach to pastoral care. 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 circumstance 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 RE Lead and the SLT 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 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. Governing Committee members will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. The Governing Committee remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

'*The mission of schools is to develop a sense of truth of what is good and beautiful. And this occurs through a rich path made up of many ingredients*.' (Pope Francis)