St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School

RSE Policy

Spring 2024

Consultation

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School

Policy for Relationship and Sex Education

Context

This policy is informed by Amoris Laetitia (Pope Francis 2016), guidance from The Catholic Bishop's Conference (Learning to Love March 2017) and the Diocese of East Anglia document, Guidance and Principles for Relationship and Sex Education, issued (January 2018).
Our policy for 'Relationship and Sex Education' has been written in conjunction with the DfE guidance for schools (DfE Statutory Guidance 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' June 2019) and is closely linked to our 'Religious Education' policy. It was written following consultation with parents and Governors.
This policy is informed by law, including the Equality Act 2010.

Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement underpins teaching and learning within our school:
'The family of St. Francis of Assisi is a school community following in the footsteps of Christ and built on the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church")

'Learning & Growing Together in God's Love'

Inspired by the life of Christ we seek to provide an exceptional education which enables our children:

- to fully embrace all possibilities
- to flourish
- to develop their faith
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and therefore to choose a path that enables them to be a positive influence upon our world.'

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, we will 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

Defining Relationships and Sex Education

Relationship education is part of the RE, personal, social and health education (PSHE), PE and Science curriculum in our school. When we inform our pupils about relationship issues, we do this with regard to teachings of the Catholic Church, morality and individual responsibility and in a way that allows children to ask and explore spiritual, social and moral questions. The DfE guidance states that relationship education is about 'understanding the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care'. At St Francis of Assisi we value this statement and endeavour to encourage our pupils to understand and respect its importance.
The DfE guidance also 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 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.

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At St Francis, we will achieve this by ensuring that the focus will 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." Our curriculum plans include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

Statutory Curriculum Requirements

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. It will also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

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 the 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.

Aims and Objectives

As a school community, we recognise that parents have the prime responsibility for teaching their children about Relationships and Sex Education. We will therefore, supplement and support our parents with appropriate programmes of study for all our pupils.

We aim to:

- Make the children feel loved, cared for and secure in surroundings where Catholic values are practised and where courtesy, respect and consideration for others are of paramount importance;
- Develop a sensible, responsible, factual, basis of knowledge founded on love and the teaching of the Catholic Church;
- Guide their understanding that healthy relationships are God's gift to us and should be enjoyed and never abused.

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Within our relationship education we teach our pupils about:

- Looking after and maintaining a healthy body;
- Respecting their bodies;
- The importance of family life;
- Building positive relationships with others, involving trust and respect;
- Moral questions;
- Respecting the views of other people.

In the Science curriculum the pupils at our school learn:

- That animals, including humans, move, feed, grow, use their senses and reproduce;
- To recognise and compare the main external parts of the bodies of humans;
- That humans and animals can produce offspring and these grow into adults;
- Describe the basic needs of animals, including humans, for survival;
- Describe the importance of humans for exercise, eating the rights amounts of different types of food and hygiene;
- Describe the changes as humans develop to old age including puberty
- To recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others and treat others with sensitivity

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.

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.

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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;
- the facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation;

Relationship and Sex Education Curriculum

We teach about the uniqueness of the Human Being and relationships through different aspects of the curriculum. While we carry out the main relationship education in our PSHE curriculum, we also cover relationships in other areas of the curriculum. In particular, Science, PE and RE, which we believe contribute significantly to children's knowledge and understanding of their own bodies and how they are changing and developing. We always encourage our pupils to voice their opinions and discuss any issues they may have with other pupils and adults in the room. The Relationships and Sex Education curriculum will follow the model scheme of work developed by the Catholic Education Service (CES) adapted where necessary to reflect the specific needs of our pupils.

Curriculum Content

At St Francis, we use a relationship education programme by Ten:Ten called 'Life to the Full' throughout the school alongside RE. This has been carefully written with input from the Catholic Education Service, and is a scheme approved by the Diocese. The programme is intended to support teachers and parents in Catholic schools to enable the holistic growth of children.

A full breakdown of lesson content from EYFS to Year 6 can be found on our website although, in line with Diocesan guidelines, we leave the teaching of puberty, sexual intercourse and conception to the Summer Terms of Years 5 and 6. As a result, so some of the Year 4 content in the scheme is moved to these year groups.

Parents are invited to annual information meetings where they can become more familiar with the structure and content of the programme, as well as asking any questions they may have. All parents are given log-in details so they can access the lessons from home, as well as accessing parental support materials provided by Ten:Ten. Teachers send a week-by-week overview of upcoming lessons, so that parents are aware of weeks where sensitive topics will be taught and discussed, and so that they may further support their child at home.

Teaching and Learning

Class teachers are responsible for the teaching and learning of Relationships and Sex education supported by the RE leader and PSHE Leader. The majority of lessons will take place within the usual class organisation and will mostly take place in the summer term.

The RE leader will plan and co-ordinate the teaching of 'Ten: Ten Life to the Full' alongside the class teacher and there will be the opportunity for pupil groupings to reflect the needs of the pupils' e.g. single gender; individual; access to same gender staff; where appropriate.

Inclusion and Differentiated Learning

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.

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.

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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.

Assessment, Monitoring and Review

Relationship education has three main elements:

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

These areas will be monitored by the class teacher and any notes made, will be in the class teachers short term planning. As a school we assess relationship education through pupil self-assessment, peer-group assessment and teacher assessment (see also our Assessment policy).

It is the responsibility of the RE leader to monitor provision for RSE throughout the school and provide feedback, if necessary, to the class teachers.

A member of the governing body will monitor the RSE teaching and learning annually through discussions with members of staff, pupil perception interviews and parental feedback. The responsible governor will report to the full governing body annually with evaluations and recommendations for development. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy

Children's Questions

The school and 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. We 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. 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 prejudiced or is of a personal nature.
In these cases, we will contact parents to work in partnership to address the question posed or follow the school's Safeguarding Policy if abuse is suspected (see below).

Supporting 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.

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The Role of Parents and Carers

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 providing material to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help parents/carers to find out more. Parents/carers will be informed by letter 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.

We will:

- Inform parents about the school's policy and practice;
- Provide an annual workshop for parents to view materials and ask questions
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the relationship education of their child;
- Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy, or about the arrangements for relationship education in the school;
- Inform parents about the best practice known with regard to relationship education, so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers are giving to children at home.

We believe that, through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing bodies and their increasing responsibilities.

Parents continue to have have ***the right to withdraw*** w 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. 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. Please refer to the DfE guidance Page 17 for further details on the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw).

The Role of Other Members in the Community

Our school will often call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver 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 delivering a session. Any visitor must adhere to our code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Checklist for External Speakers to Schools'. Health professionals 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.
Teachers conduct relationship education lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes reference to being involved (or being likely to be involved in) sexual activity, then the teacher will take the reference seriously and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they have been victims of other forms of abuse. They will not try to investigate, but will immediately inform the named person for child protection issues about their concerns. The Headteacher will then deal with the matter in consultation with health care professionals (see also our policy on Child Protection).

The Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher 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 and appropriate agencies. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the Headteacher's responsibility (as RE and RSE Co-ordinator) to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach about relationships effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity, in accordance with Catholic teaching.

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The Headteacher monitors this policy on a regular basis and reports to governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

The Role of 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 PSHE framework. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents (for example, 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. 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.

Confidentiality

All governors, all teachers, all support staff and all parents will 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 that 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 that are discussed in the programme. Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties, in line with the school's pastoral care policy. 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 circumstances 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

Equalities Obligations

The governing body 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.

Implementation and Review of Policy

Implementation of the policy will take place after consultation with the Governors in the **Spring Term 2024.**
This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Head teacher, RSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and Staff.
The next review date is **Spring 2026**

Dissemination

The draft policy will be given to all members of the Governing Body, and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the document will be available to all parents on the school's website and a copy is available in the school office. Details of the content of the RSE curriculum will also be published on the school's web site.

Consultation