

ST AGNES

Catholic Primary School

With Jesus beside us, we do our best



POLICY FOR RELATIONSHIPS HEALTH & SEX EDUCATION

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Our Vision and Values

At St. Agnes we believe that although we are all very different we have a way of living, behaving and doing things that allow us to serve as a witness to the Catholic Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our school motto is: **With Jesus Beside Us We Do Our Best to:**

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|  | <p>Believe We are all valued in God's family and the school family. We believe in ourselves and in our abilities.</p> <p>Persevere When things get difficult we will persevere so that we will grow stronger, realising we can turn to each other and God.</p> <p>Contribute We will contribute to the life of the school, the parish, the local community and the wider world to which we all belong. <i>By doing these we will:</i></p> <p>Achieve By being the best we can be, we will achieve in making a difference to others and living as God would want us to.</p> |
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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.

The Consultation Process:

- pupil focus groups / school council Autumn 2024
- consultation with parents / carers Autumn 2024
- review of RSE curriculum content with staff -consultation with wider school community e.g. school nurse Summer 2024
- consultation with school governors Autumn 2024

Implementation and Review of Policy

Implementation of the policy will take place after consultation with the Governors in the Autumn 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 Autumn 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 through the school's prospectus 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 website.

DEFINING RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION

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 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 DFE identifies three main elements: “attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding”².

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 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.

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.

¹ Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfEE, 2000

² ibid

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 aims state that 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"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.

³ *Gravissimum Educationis* 1

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;
- how to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception;

Outcomes

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.

EQUALITIES OBLIGATIONS

The governing body has 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, 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.

SPECIFIC CURRICULUM

At St Agnes, 'A Journey in Love' will be the programme which will mainly be used to deliver our Relationship and Sex education teaching. Created by Sister Jude Groden it is one of the current recommended programmes of study for the teaching of RSE in Catholic schools. Written as a progressive scheme of work that supports Religious Education, PSHE and Science curricula taught within the school; some of the will be delivered in a cross curricular context. In addition, at St Agnes we will use the new model curriculum from CES published in Autumn 2016 and revised Autumn 2019 to deliver lessons to meet any objectives not covered specifically by the Journey in Love programme. Supplemental material provided by Christopher Winter Project is also used in years 5 and 6.

As children progress through school, they discover more and more about themselves and the wider world. This thirst for learning new things, in all aspects of life, is fostered by the school, and we attempt to create a safe, stimulating environment for learning; supporting all children in their development. Our mission statement, which drives the school, tries to achieve this goal following the Gospel values of truth and respect, understanding our journey as children of God, that we are both special and unique.

Central to our work within the school is learning about our faith, including understanding ourselves, our position in our community and how we develop as human beings - our spiritual, social, emotional and physical development. This is how 'A Journey in Love' fits in to the school's curriculum. The scheme permeates through all levels of learning throughout the school. It focuses on friendship, family, community, relationships and spirituality; and is a guide to the children's development as young Catholics.

As you would expect, not all issues related to personal development are covered by the end of Year 6. The content is age appropriate and is taught with sensitivity, taking into account the children's level of maturity in regard to the delivery of the lessons. Some lessons may be differentiated depending upon the child's ability in order to meet their specific needs.

As with all aspects of learning, children are naturally curious and many will have questions related to their lessons. Opportunities to discuss questions form part of the lessons and, again, these are treated with care and understanding.

Each year group takes up the theme of love:

Early Years

The wonder of being special and unique

Year 1

We meet God's love in our family

Year 2

We meet God's love in the community

Year 3

How we live in love

Year 4

God loves us in our differences

Year 5

God loves us in my changing and development

Year 6

The wonder of God's love in creating new life

INCLUSION OF FGM

Following consultation with the CES and on advice from the National FGM Centre, it has been agreed that the teaching of FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) will be included in the RSE curriculum at the relevant stages of the Keeping Safe aspect of the curriculum.

The teaching of FGM will be done sensitively using recommended resources from the CES and NSPCC. These sessions will be framed in the core belief that our bodies are made by God and given to us as wonderful gifts that deserve the respect of ourselves and others. It will also be reinforced that FGM is an illegal practice. Pupils will know what FGM is, what the law states on FGM, how to manage the threat of FGM (to themselves and others) and how to seek help and support if it has happened to them.

The teaching of FGM will be included in **all** staff safeguarding training.

Although there is no statutory requirement to teach FGM there is a diocesan requirement and therefore our school has decided to include its teaching in our RSE learning. Parents who do not wish for their child/ren to be included in this aspect of learning need to contact the head teacher, in writing, requesting permission for their child/ren to be withdrawn from this element of the lesson.

PROGRAMME / RESOURCES

The model RSE primary curriculum published by CES is integrated into our curriculum.

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules will help teachers create a safe environment in which both they, and students do not feel embarrassed or anxious about unintended or unexpected questions or comments. Examples include no one (teacher or pupil) having to answer a personal question; no one will be forced to take part in a discussion; only the correct names for body parts will be used; meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.
- distancing techniques - Teachers can avoid embarrassment and protect pupils' privacy by always depersonalising discussions. For example, role play can be used to help pupils 'act out' situations. Question boxes can preserve children's identity whilst tackling issues of concern. Case studies with invented characters, appropriate videos, can all help pupils discuss sensitive issues and develop their decision-making skills in a safe environment. These will be organised following guidance from the RE Co-ordinator.
- discussion and project learning - research has shown that these strategies encourage learning and are enjoyed by children. Pupils take part in a structured activity in which they can help: draw on previous knowledge to develop more understanding; practise their social and personal skills; consider their beliefs and attitudes about different topics; reflect on their new learning and plan and shape future learning.
- reflection- this is crucial for learning as it encourages pupils to consolidate what they have learned and to form new understanding, skills and attitudes. Teachers can help pupils reflect on their learning by asking questions such as: what was it like doing this discussion today? What did you learn from the others, especially those who had a different experience or belief from your own? What do you think you will be able to do as a result of this discussion? What else do you need to think or learn about?
- *active learning is most effective when pupils are working in groups. Methods include discussion techniques such as the use of circle time in primary schools, case studies and project work.*
- brainstorming
- film & video
- group work
- role-play
- trigger drawings
- values clarification

ASSESSMENT

Pupils will be assessed in terms of their understanding of the objectives. This will be the responsibility of the adult who delivers the programme. In years 5 and 6 this may not be the class teacher as the programme is delivered separately to boys and girls. In some cases, pupils will be required to record a mind map before and after completing their Journey in Love programme.

A record of each session is kept in each teacher's planning for the delivery of RSE. The programme will be assessed, monitored and evaluated by the RSE Coordinator in accordance with the school's monitoring and evaluation policy. Where possible, pupils are given the opportunity for self-evaluation at an age appropriate level.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The RSE Co-coordinator 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. The results of the evaluation should be reported to interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

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 ~~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.

Parents must be consulted before this policy is ratified by the governors. They 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, at the end of the consultation process, every parent and carer will have 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 head teacher in writing, clearly stating their rationale behind their decision. Where possible, the school will provide these parents with material so they can deliver this learning to their children. However, at St. Agnes 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, RE Co-coordinator, supported by the PSHE Co-coordinator and Science Co-coordinator.

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 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 'Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools'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

Governors

- Draw up the RSE policy, in consultation with 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.

Head teacher

The Head teacher 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/PSHE/ Science Co-coordinators

These co-ordinators, along with the head and deputy head and the members of staff with responsibility for child protection have 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.

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.

⁴ Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools, CES, Feb. 2011

Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSE. 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.

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 a 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 governors 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. These should be referred to the appropriate adult at school who will deal with them in a sensitive way at a more appropriate time. This may include the involvement of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 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 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 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 RSE 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. The results of the evaluation should be reported to these groups of interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.