

# 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:**



#### **Believe**

We are all valued in God's family and the school family. We **believe** in ourselves and in our abilities.

#### **Persevere**

When things get difficult we will **persevere** so that we will grow stronger, realising we can turn to each other and God.

#### **Contribute**

We will **contribute** to the life of the school, the parish, the local community and the wider world to which we all belong.

*By doing these we will:*

#### **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.

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 Spring 2021
- consultation with parents / carers Spring 2021
- review of RSE curriculum content with staff and pupils via online training through Ten Ten Autumn 2021
- consultation with wider school community e.g. school nurse Autumn 2020
- consultation with school governors Autumn 2020

#### **Implementation and Review of Policy**

Implementation of the policy will take place after consultation with the Governors in the Autumn Term 2020. 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 2023

#### **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”<sup>1</sup>. 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”<sup>2</sup>.

## 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfEE, 2000

<sup>2</sup> 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"<sup>3</sup> 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.

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<sup>3</sup> *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 policy. It is a resource created by Sister Jude Groden of BRES. It is one of the current recommended programmes of study for Catholic schools for Relationship and Sex Education, and has been written as a progressive scheme of work that supports the Religious Education, PSHE and Science curricula taught within the school; some of the objectives therefore 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.

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, who attempt to create a safe, stimulating environment for learning; supporting all children in their development. Our mission statement which drives the school, attempts to achieve this goal following the Gospel values of truth and respect, understanding our journey as children of God, 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; 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.

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

## **PROGRAMME / RESOURCES**

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

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules – a set of ground rules will help teachers create a safe environment in which they do not feel embarrassed or anxious about unintended or unexpected questions or comments from pupils. Examples of ground rules include no one (teacher or pupil) will have 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, and visits to theatre in education groups 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
- project learning Discussion and project learning has been shown by research to encourage learning and is enjoyed by pupils. 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 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 like these: 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. Pupils will be required to record a mind map before and after completing their Journey in Love programme.

**Assessment and Recording** 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. Pupils are given the opportunity for self-evaluation at an age appropriate level.

**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.

## 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.

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 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.

## 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-ordinator, supported by the PSHE Co-ordinator and Science Co-ordinator.

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'<sup>4</sup>.

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;

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<sup>4</sup> Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools, CES, Feb. 2011



- 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-ordinators**

These co-ordinators with the head teacher has a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to RSE and the provision of in-service training. *(They will be supported by the deputy head (if not already involved) and the member of staff with responsibility for child protection).*

#### **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 have completed training linked to this policy via **Ten, Ten Theatre Company's** online training. 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.