

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Moral and Values Framework

“The Church is formally opposed to an often widespread form of imparting sex information dissociated from moral principles”. (*Familiaris Consortio* 37, Pope John Paul II)

The source of our moral framework is ultimately from the life and teaching of Christ and clarified through the teaching of the Catholic Church.

Relationships and Sex Education is but part of the school’s education in relationships. Consequently, each pupil is entitled to experience a school climate in which the quality of relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, is marked by honesty, personal identification, warmth, trust and security. The quality of these relationships must be valued.

Relationships and Sex Education is offered in the spirit of the Gospel, with regard to our becoming more fully human, our education should be not be “problem” or “crisis-led”. It should be positive, showing the potential for development, while enabling the risks involved to be understood and appreciated.

The school acknowledges that many pupils come from backgrounds that do not reflect the values and experiences promoted by the Relationships and Sex Education Programme. Sensitivity is therefore needed to avoid causing hurt and offence to them and their families, and to allow such to feel a sense of worth. Teachers should help pupils of all backgrounds and circumstances to reach the ‘ideal’ that we could all aim for, even if we are destined to fall short of it.

Underlying Principles

- We are made to love and be loved and that love is central to human relationships
- Positive, caring attitudes and environments are essential for the development of a good self image
- Any teaching about relationships and sexuality is intended to provide information, deepen understanding, develop interpersonal skills and encourage caring, responsible and healthy attitudes
- Genuine love is creative
- Sexuality is a gift from God
- Mature Christian sexuality involves openness and commitment to others

➤ What we say with our bodies reflects what we mean in our hearts and minds

“God is love and in himself he lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in his own image and continually keeping it in being, God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman and vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion. Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being”.

(*Familiaris Consortio* 11, Pope John Paul II)

“Sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person – body, emotions and soul – and manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love”.

(*Familiaris Consortio* 37, Pope John Paul II)

Aims and Objectives of the School Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Relationships and Sex Education is an integral part of the curriculum for all pupils. It takes place in the spiritual and moral context of the Catholic tradition.

The aims and objectives of the policy need to be read in light of the school’s mission statement.

Aims:

- To recognise that we are all individuals created by God.
- To help promote a good self image and sense of self-worth by developing a positive attitude to our own bodies.
- To reassure pupils at a time of physical, spiritual, psychological changes so that they can cope with their own personal development and relate it to a growing awareness of others.
- To promote a true appreciation of the gift of sexuality and understanding and acceptance of our own sexuality.
- To develop a sense of responsibility in choices and decisions concerning our and others values and attitudes.
- To encourage positive attitudes towards family life, friendships and relationships via guidance on how to develop and sustain healthy, stable and loving relationships.
- To bring about a deeper appreciation of the importance and values of the family, while appreciating the varied forms the family can take in contemporary society.
- To encourage students to recognise and appreciate the positive values expressed in the teaching of the Catholic Church on relationships and sexuality.
- To encourage the acquisition of skills and attitudes which allow students to manage their relationships in a responsible and healthy manner making informed decisions based on the moral teaching of the Catholic Church.

Objectives: At Key Stage 3

Pupils should be able:

- To understand the changes that have taken/are taking place in their own bodies;
- To have a positive self image;
- To know they have value and have respect for themselves and for others
- To be aware of their emotions and how they respond to emotional change;
- To understand the factors involved in family life and the role of parents;
- To appreciate the value of relationships, their changing nature, both within and outside the family;
- To be aware of the choices they make in relationships;
- To understand the life process of reproduction;
- To understand and know the human life cycle, including physical and emotional changes during adolescence and physical and emotional factors necessary for humans in the early stages of development;
- To have an awareness of human fertility – the constant fertility of the male, the cyclical fertility of the female, and the consequent changes in feelings the cycle brings;
- To be aware of the variety of attitudes there are towards sexuality in society and to be able to make their own judgements on the values they meet;
- To recognise that they are gifted and that sexuality is a gift from God;
- To know what is meant by responsible behaviour in matters of sexuality;
- To begin to make decisions and judgements based on knowledge of issues considered with personal health, well being and safety;
- To recognise that birth, growth and marriage are celebrated by rituals we call Sacraments;
- To know that some people choose to remain single and celibate for a variety of reasons;
- To understand why some actions are considered good and others bad;
- To know that certain lifestyles and patterns of behaviour can damage health;
- To understand and be aware of STI's and HIV/Aids and its transmission;
- To be aware of different moral values and explore those held by different cultures and groups.

At Key Stage 4

Pupils should be able:

- To know and understand what is involved in relationships, leading to marriage and to begin to have some understanding that family life can lead to happy, fulfilling relationships;
- To appreciate the sacramentality of marriage;
- To have positive attitudes towards their own sexuality;
- To develop responsible attitudes to sexual behaviour;

- To value human life and understand the process of human conception, birth and development;
- To appreciate the moral value attached by different societies and cultures to the embryo;
- To be able to understand and manage change in relationships;
- To know what is involved in divorce;
- To be able to express their feelings and be aware of themselves and the emotional changes they experience;
- To be aware of the influence of the media on attitudes to sexuality, to self image and stereotyping;
- To understand the importance of the choices we make and the effect we have on others;
- To be aware of different lifestyles and the effects they can have on those involved and on society;
- To know what is meant by sexually transmitted infection (STI);
- To understand HIV/AIDS and the issues involved;
- To be able to discuss sensitive and controversial issues, such as contraception, abortion, HIV/AIDS, and developments which involve the consideration of attitudes, values, beliefs and morality;
- To accept responsibility for one's actions and to be able to justify personal choice and decisions.

Same sex relationships

The following should be read in light of the underlying principles, that 'sexuality is a gift from God'. Given the nature of our society, pupils are likely to ask questions about same sex relationships. The aims of teaching about same sex tendencies and relationships and responding to pupils' questions and concerns should be:

- To enable pupils to understand the Catholic teaching on prejudice, compassion, love and same sex tendencies and relationships. That to express same sex tendencies itself is not evil or sinful, however the Catholic Church teaches that sexual acts amongst people of the same sex goes against natural law.
- To help pupils develop a sense of acceptance and understanding of peoples' sexual orientation.
- To examine misinformation about same sex tendencies.

Parental Responsibility

The school is clear that its role in providing education on sex and relationships is meant to complement – **not replace** – that of parents and carers. They are the first and core teachers.

It should also be understood that the school cannot take any responsibility for what activities individual pupils may choose to engage in out of school. This is the responsibility of parents/carers. However, it is quite possible that a pupil may disclose information that a member of staff cannot ignore. In these cases the school's Safeguarding Children procedures will be followed. As professionals we cannot promise confidentiality.

Parents/carers also have a legal right to withdraw their child from SRE. As a school we acknowledge the right for parents/guardians to withdraw their child but would find this difficult to implement. If this is the case then school must be contacted at the earliest opportunity. It is hoped that in choosing to send their child to a Catholic school, parents/carers will be supportive of the ethos and principles of this policy.

Approved by Governors Summer 2008
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