

St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School



Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Written/Revision Date: 7 November 2024

Next Review: 6 November 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chris Hopkins', written over a horizontal line.

Approved:
Chris Hopkins, Chair of Governors

Date: 7 November 2024

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a Roman Catholic community, placing God at the centre of our lives. Christian values permeate every aspect of the school day. As a small friendly school, we aim to produce the warmth and intimacy of the family. We recognise each individual as special and loved by God, caring for one another and fostering love, trust and respect.

When mistakes are made we recognise them as opportunities for learning and consequent reconciliation.

We aim to help all children fulfil their potential. We have high expectations of the children; we want them to do their best socially, personally, academically and spiritually.

We recognise each child's full entitlement to education. We value children's uniqueness and endeavour to nurture their potential. We strive to promote in them a sense of personal worth and self-confidence, as well as an awareness of their responsibilities to self and others.

INTRODUCTION

In this policy the Governors and teachers of St Mary Magdalen's, 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.

RELATED POLICIES

- RE Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Science Policy
- School Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) RATIONALE

The DfE guidance 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” (The Department for Education (DfE) Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers; Page 4).

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. In primary schools the focus should 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.” (page 19) This would 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. We believe that all parents and teachers are called to develop the whole person: physical, intellectual, emotional, psychological, aesthetic, sexual, moral, spiritual and religious. Catholic education about relationships and sex is an integral part of this development of the whole person. As Catholics we see all these areas as graced by God and leading to God.

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.

AIM OF RSE AND THE MISSION STATEMENT

RSE at St Mary Magdalen's reflects the school ethos and Mission Statement which 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 to be a place where each child is seen and appreciated as a unique individual, made in the image and likeness of God, and where each child is empowered to keep themselves healthy and safe.

"... children and young people must be helped ... to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual endowments ..."

"Let them be given also ... a positive and prudent sexual education."

"... children and young people have a right to be motivated to appraise moral values with a right conscience, to embrace them with a personal adherence, together with a deeper knowledge and love of God."

Gravissimum Educatonis, Vatican II, 28 October 1965

All parents and teachers are called to develop the whole person: physical, intellectual, emotional, psychological, aesthetic, sexual, moral, spiritual and religious. Catholic education about relationships and sex is an integral part of this development of the whole person. As Catholics we see all these areas as graced by God and leading to God.

RSE at St Mary Magdalen's reflects the school ethos and Mission Statement. It is developed through cross-curricular links with RE, Science, and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). This knowledge and understanding is further developed through the Catholic RSE scheme of work "Life to the Full".

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

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND INCLUSION

St Mary Magdalen's RSE Policy reflects its commitment to the principle of equal opportunities. We recognise that 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.

This will ensure the entitlement of **all** pupils to develop their self-esteem and self-identify to enable a confident participation in the curriculum in line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy.

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the varying needs of individual pupils in respect of pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances. Lessons will also help children to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying (including cyber-bullying), aggressive behaviours and the use of prejudice-based language. These lessons will help children understand how to respond and ask for help.

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 school will be using the 'Life to the Full' resources produced by Ten:Ten Resources to teach RSE. The appendix to this policy provides further information about the programme content and structure.

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

ASSESSMENT/ REVIEWING LEARNING

There will be a review of children's learning at the end of every RSE teaching unit and findings will be used to inform future teaching and in the evaluation of the teaching programme.

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.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ADVICE

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 Behaviour Policy. Teachers will explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection and Policy.

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE ISSUES AND RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS

All RSE at St Mary Magdalen's will be taught in line with the guidance of the Diocese of Southwark and in conjunction with government recommendations.

The school will consult with parents about any significant changes that are made to the RSE policy and practice.

Teachers will answer questions honestly but with due regard given to the nature of the question and the age and maturity of the questioner. In some cases, it may be inappropriate for the teacher to respond to a specific question and the pupil will be referred to his/her parents. In the same way, not all questions will be answered publicly, and the teacher will need to assess the appropriateness of the question to consider if it matches the maturity and understanding of the whole class group.

Teachers should never feel pressured into discussing their personal views of experiences and should always respect the sensitivity of their position as a teacher in a Catholic school.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents

We recognise that parents (and other carers who stand in their place) are the primary educators of their children. It is their right and responsibility to inform and educate their children in matters relating to human relationships and sexual development. As a Catholic

school we provide the principal means by which the church assists parents and carers in educating their children and will endeavour to do so recognising the unique nature of every child and their family.

The Education Act 1996 gives parents the right to withdraw their child from any or all of the school's sex education programme although certain elements are covered under the Science National Curriculum which is statutory for all children. Parents cannot withdraw their children from statutory relationships education.

The school is aware that good communication with parents is of utmost importance in this area and in order to promote this, the RSE Policy is available to view on the school website.

Governors

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, the governing board will keep the school's policy for RSE up to date. It will ensure that copies of the policy are made available to parents should they so wish.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of the RSE Policy in liaison with the governors, parents, Diocese Education Commission, and the Local Authority.

RSE Coordinator

This position is held by the RE Coordinator. They have responsibility for curriculum planning, continued professional development and training to support teachers to deliver RSE. This recognises the distinct nature of this area of the curriculum within a Catholic school and the importance of our faith in any teaching regarding relationships and sex. As elements of RSE will be delivered across the curriculum, other Coordinators (Science and PSHE) will also support and monitor the effective delivery of RSE at St Mary Magdalen's.

Teachers and Other Adults

All teachers have a responsibility of care. As well as fostering academic progress, they should actively contribute to the physical, moral and spiritual wellbeing 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 to all staff teaching RSE.

RSE is a whole school issue. All staff are involved in developing children's personal and social skills. As staff move around the school they are role models, giving examples of conflict resolution and establishing relationships of mutual trust and respect which children can learn from.

Organisation

The RE Coordinator has the responsibility, along with the Headteacher to ensure that the planned RSE programme is delivered effectively. All class teachers will be responsible for

delivering their section of the programme to their class. All teachers will use the Catholic RSE scheme of work, "Life to the Full", in conjunction with other cross-curricular activities such as assembly, story time, circle time, PSHE and RE lessons.

Classes will remain mixed (boys and girls) for all elements, except for Years 5 and 6 where some single sex sessions may be held based on the needs and experiences of the children.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of the school's approach to RSE will be assessed annually through monitoring activities which may include planning and book scrutinies, lesson observations and questionnaires for pupils, parents and staff. This monitoring and evaluation will be carried out by the RE Coordinator with the support of the Senior Leadership Team and the governing board.

'Ten Life to the Full

RELATED POLICIES

- RE Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Science Policy
- School Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

- **Module One: Created and Loved by God**

Module One: Created and Loved by God explores the individual. Rooted in the teaching that we are made in the image and likeness of God, it helps children to develop an understanding of the importance of valuing themselves as the basis for personal relationships.

Key Stage One

Children learn that we are uniquely made by a loving God, that we have differences and similarities (including physical differences between boys and girls), key information about staying physically healthy, understanding feelings and emotions, including strong feelings like anger, and the cycle of life from birth to old age. Within this module, children will be introduced to the names of genitalia.

Lower Key Stage Two

Children learn to understand differences, respecting our bodies, puberty and changing bodies (Y4), strategies to support emotional well-being including practicing thankfulness, and the development of pupils' understanding of life before birth.

Upper Key Stage Two

Children learn appreciation of physical and emotional differences, a more complex understanding of physical changes in girls' and boys' bodies, body image, strong emotional feelings, the impact of the internet and social media on emotional well-being (including teaching on pornography), a more nuanced and scientific understanding of life in the womb and how babies are made (Y6) and menstruation.

- **Module Two: Created to Love Others**

Module Two: Created to Love Others explores the individual's relationship with others. Building on the understanding that we have been created out of love and for love, this module explores how we take this calling into our family, friendships and relationships and teaches strategies for developing healthy relationships and keeping safe.

Key Stage One

In the Unit, Personal Relationships, children are taught to identify the Special People in their lives whom they can love and trust, how to cope with various social situations and dilemmas, and the importance of saying sorry and forgiveness within relationships. In the Unit Keeping Safe, they explore the risks of being online using the Childnet resources, the difference between good and bad secrets, and teaching on physical boundaries (incorporating PANTS resource from the NSPCC).

Lower Key Stage Two

The sessions here help children to develop a more complex appreciation of different family structures and there are activities and strategies to help them develop healthy relationships with family and friends: here they are also taught simplified Cognitive

Behaviour Therapy techniques for managing thoughts, feelings and actions. In the Keeping Safe unit, NSPCC resources and animated stories are used to teach about bullying and abuse.

Upper Key Stage Two

The sessions in the Personal Relationships Unit aim to equip the children with strategies for more complex experiences of relationships and conflict: this includes sessions that help children to identify and understand how to respond to spoken and unspoken pressure, the concept of consent and some practical demonstrations of this, and further teachings on how our thoughts and feelings have an impact on how we act. In the Keeping Safe unit the programme explores the risks of sharing and chatting online at a level appropriate to Y5 and Y6, and a more complex understanding of different forms of abuse.

- **Module Three: Created to Live in Community**

In all learning stages this module explores the individual's relationship with the wider world. Children explore how human beings are relational by nature and are called to love others in the wider community through service, through dialogue and through working for the Common Good.

Key Stage One

In this module the children will learn about the communities they live in both local and global. They will learn how they can help or harm a community and they will explore the rights and responsibilities that come with belonging to a community.

Lower Key Stage Two

In this module the children explore some of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. They learn about the concepts of the Common Good, social relationships and stewardship.

Upper Key Stage Two

The children will build on their learning in Lower Key Stage Two about Catholic Social Teaching. Children will learn that the Trinity demonstrates the perfect loving community, and we are called to emulate this self-giving and self-sacrificing love in our communities.

Diversity of Human Relationships

Throughout the teaching of the RSE curriculum, our teachers will ensure that every child is reassured and that every child's family background is affirmed. The 'Life To The Full' programme will support teachers in this as:

- The 'Life to the Full' resources are inclusive of all children, families and teaching staff;
- From the very start the programme acknowledges that families are made up differently (including single-parent families, blended families, step-parents, carers etc.) and it celebrates the family unit in whatever form it takes;

- In Upper Key Stage Two the 'Life to the Full' resources refer to the fact that some children have two mums and two dads as part of a list of family set-ups – this is the only explicit reference to same-sex relationships in the programme;
- The programme does not explicitly refer to transgenderism;
- The programme emphasises very strongly the dignity of every person as being created and loved by God;
- The only reference to sexual intimacy is in the Upper Key Stage Two session 'Making Babies'. In this session sexual intimacy is discussed within the context of a heterosexual marriage, and the Catholic Christian point of view is clearly stated. This teaching is in line with the statutory guidance from the Department for Education.