



# **St Mark's West Essex Catholic School**

## **Relationship and Sex Education Policy**

**Date Reviewed:** November 2016

**Next Review Date:** November 2019

**Committee:** Curriculum, Pupils and Admissions

**Every person is a unique creation of God. Our Catholic school recognises its members as unique individuals to be valued and respected. We strive to instil in all our members the importance of respect for both themselves and for others.**

Any teaching about love and sexual relationships in our school must be rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching about what it is to be truly human in Christ, what it means to live well in relationship with others and be presented within a positive framework of Christian virtue. For this reason, we encourage our staff to speak about Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) rather than Sex and Relationship Education (SRE), since this emphasises the importance of healthy relationships to human well-being, as the core learning within our RSE curriculum.

Relationship and Sex Education in our school must allow our young people to examine their sexuality in a secure, comfortable environment which will enable them to recognise the wonder of God's creation and the importance of human dignity.

Relationship and Sex Education in our Catholic school is taught in a moral framework based on the teachings of Jesus Christ; the context of its teaching is within a loving relationship and the development of responsible and healthy attitudes.

Since our Catholic school is committed to the education of the whole person, teaching on relationships and sexuality needs to be reflected in each relevant part of the curriculum. Whilst, for example, some aspects of RSE will be more appropriately explored in science lessons and some more appropriately explored in RE lessons, each should be informed by the other. Each discipline should speak with consistency about the meaning of human love and the virtues that are enshrined in the Church's teaching on human love.

Whilst promoting Catholic virtues, we will ensure that children and young people are offered a broad and balanced RSE programme which provides them with clear factual, scientific information when relevant and meets the statutory requirements placed on schools. This includes teaching pupils about the laws relating to forced marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion and equalities legislation (including the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013).

It is the responsibility of the appropriate members of staff to ensure that the personnel delivering the programme are fully aware of the school's requirements for the teaching of the Relationship and Sex Education Programme and that all materials presented to the pupils are also in line with school policy.

**RE -** Head of Department / Line Manager  
**SCIENCE -** Head of Department: Science / Senior Assistant Headteacher  
**PSHCE -** Head of Department / Senior Assistant Headteacher

Those responsible - as outlined above - will also monitor the content and presentation of the programme and evaluate its effectiveness.

1 Catechism of the Catholic Church: Part 1: Section 2: Paragraph 6 - 356  
The role of PSHCE means that many teachers are involved and, as questions regarding relationship and / or sexual matters may be posed by pupils in other curriculum areas at any time, responsibility for supporting the school's Relationship and Sex Education Policy lies with the whole school. Where, for any reason, staff feel unable to answer pupils' questions they are encouraged to seek assistance from the appropriate colleague eg. Head of Department, Head of Year, PSHCE Leader or Senior Leader etc.

The Relationship and Sex Education Policy is available to staff via the School Policy Area on the Intranet.

Queries will fall into three broad categories:

- a detached wish for information/better understanding
- seeking advice for personal reasons
- attention seeking

### **Guidelines for dealing with questions about sexual matters**

1. Are they relevant to the topic in hand? If not, there is a number of possible reasons for children asking them, reasons which lie with the questioner and not with the group, some of whom could be upset by the questions. The questioner should be told that the teacher will see the pupil at the end of the lesson in order to deal with the question. A simple answer may be all that is needed.

Where the questions are relevant the teacher will probably have anticipated them and can respond accordingly with the group.

If the topic is currently being studied on the Relationship and Sex Education Programme the pupil could be referred to the relevant teacher.

There may be an indication of an underlying problem - the pupil's Form Tutor/Head of Year / Senior Assistant Headteacher must be contacted.

Staff are unwise to offer pupils complete confidentiality when answering questions; obviously it would not be appropriate to share pupils' personal details with colleagues unless absolutely necessary, however there may be occasions when teachers giving sex education have to exercise their discretion and judgement about how to deal with particularly explicit issues raised by an individual pupil. In line with the 1993 Act the teacher should normally discuss the child's concerns first with the parents and see how they would like the matter to be handled. Where the parents wish them to do so, it may be appropriate to respond individually to the child's question outside the class. In exceptional circumstances, where the teacher has reason to believe that a child may be distressed or in danger, it may be appropriate for the teacher to speak individually to the child before consulting the parents to clarify the basis for the concerns. Where there is a risk that a teacher might be compromised in these circumstances it would be wise for them to be accompanied by another member of staff.

Where the circumstances are such as to lead the teacher to believe that the pupil has embarked upon, or is contemplating, a course of conduct which is likely to place him or her at moral or physical risk or in breach of the law,( see App B for a summary of the Law on Sexual Behaviour ) the teacher has a general responsibility to ensure that the child is aware of the implications and is urged to seek advice from his or her parents and if appropriate from the relevant health service professional. In such circumstances the teacher should inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer / Headteacher.

**2.** In all responses to pupils' questions and in all discussions of sexual matters the following must be kept in mind at all times:

- The teaching of the Catholic Church must inform all our teaching.
- Disagreement with the Church's teaching must never be indicated in any way. Where outside speakers are invited to present parts of the programme it must be ascertained beforehand that their presentation will be in agreement with the teachings of the Church.
- Our responsibility as a Catholic school to the parents of our pupils and their wishes regarding sex education - seek advice from Form Tutor/Head of Year / Senior Assistant Headteacher
- Our responsibilities to the pupils in our charge.
- The stated aims of the Relationship and Sex Education Programme
- The need for sensitivity to the possible complex family backgrounds of individuals within the groups - standards must be upheld without condemning individuals.
- The varying stages of maturity within the group - particularly with younger pupils, many of whom can be extremely unaware. This unawareness can be dealt with positively within the context of the prepared lesson. However, the cynical questions of peers can lead to distress, and therefore need very careful handling in a group situation.

### **Action**

**A.** An assurance of support - this must convey the Catholic principles positively eg respect for one's partner, protection of dignity.

It must never take the form of referral to an institution whose values/principals are at variance with the Catholicity of St Mark's institution and its teaching. Advice must be seen to support Catholic teaching in action as well as in word.

**B.** Try to ascertain parental involvement so far and pupil's envisaged involvement of parents in the future. If parents have not been told, try to

ascertain why - because they would not give the pupil the support he/she would like?

Be aware of possible need to involve social worker (except in cases of sexual or physical abuse this cannot be done without parental involvement).

Encourage pupils to inform parent(s). If this seems impossible to the pupil offer help in getting communication underway. If this seems unlikely to take place, decide if this is an issue on which we as a school must inform parents - if the pupil is seeking advice for personal reasons the answer is likely to be 'yes' and we must be given proof that the pupil has followed our instructions to tell parents.

### **Parental Rights**

Good teachers have always taken a pastoral interest in the welfare and well being of pupils but this function should never trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities.

Parents have the right to withdraw pupils from sex education other than those elements which are required by the National Curriculum Science Order pertaining to human reproduction and the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence.

Parents are made aware of the school's provision for Relationship and Sex Education via the school Prospectus and the full policy and programme is available to them on request. Parents will be informed of their right to withdraw pupils from the programme via a letter from the school.

The parental right to withdraw may be exercised by either parent or by a person who has responsibility or care of the child and extends to all pupils including those over compulsory school age. (A pupil in the latter category who sought to challenge the parental decision would, if he or she could not resolve the matter with the parents, ultimately have to apply to the courts.)

Parents who wish to withdraw their child from the programme should inform the school in writing; parents do not have to give reasons for their decision but may be invited voluntarily to do so, so that any misunderstandings about the nature of the Relationship and Sex Education provided by the school can be resolved.

Where a parent exercises the right to withdraw a child from all/part of the programme it should be dealt with sensitively. If appropriate the child may join a parallel group, alternatively staff should seek support from the Form Tutor/Head of Year/ Senior Assistant Headteacher.

Other documents/procedures relating to sex Education might include:

**Bullying Procedures -  
Child Protection and  
Safeguarding Procedures**

see Anti- Bullying Statement Policy  
see Child Protection Policy

**Complaints Procedures:**

Complaints related to the provision of Relationship and Sex Education should initially be addressed to the relevant Head of Department, subsequently the Associate Headteacher or the Senior Assistant Headteacher and finally the Headteacher. If it is felt that the complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily it should be referred to the Chair of the Governing Body at St Mark's via the School Office.

**Contraceptive advice -**

Information on contraception is provided within the programme; information and advice on contraception must be in line with Catholic teaching.

**Conclusion**

**In our modern society our young people are exposed to a multitude of pressures from a variety of sources which make it increasingly difficult for them to uphold the standards of personal behaviour which we, as members of the Catholic community, aspire to. It is essential that through the Relationship and Sex Education Programme they are brought to an understanding of their sexuality, the value of loving relationships and the importance of maintaining self-dignity and recognising and respecting the dignity of other individuals.**

## Relationship and Sex Education Programme

Year	Topic	Dept	Strategies
7	Puberty ; physiological, psychological changes of puberty Male and female anatomy Menstruation Importance of hygiene, nutrition, exercise throughout puberty and into adulthood	PSHE	
	Relationships; new friends, old friends. Peer pressure; being an independent person within a group	PSHE	
	“Stranger-danger” (include sex abuse) Belonging; individuality; community	PSHE RE	Diocesan regs 1a: Community 3a: Who Am I? KS£ Science Collins
	Puberty; physiological changes of puberty Male and female anatomy Menstruation Reproduction; anatomy, intercourse, conceptus foetus		
8	Relationships; friendships; bullying <i>Changing relationships; sexual feelings different people/different times</i> <i>Responsibility in relationships: respect, dignity</i> <i>Risks; exploding the myths;</i>	PSHE	
	Uniqueness	RE	1c: A sense of vocation/self
9	Loving relationships; changing relationships relationships Rights, responsibilities ,respect and risks: Chastity Teachings of major religions on sexual relationships The law relating to sexual activity; how the law protects young people Pregnancy; health risks of early intercourse and artificial birth regulation STI's Dealing with peer and partner pressure <b>ALL ASPECTS OF PROGRAMME</b>	PSHE	Journey in Love School Nurse contribution

**MUST BE  
TAUGHT GIVING CLEAR GUIDELINES  
TEACHINGS OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH**

	Keeping Healthy; sexual reproduction; ge	Sc	
<b>10</b>	Social issues	Ent&E	
	Genetics	m Sc	
<b>11</b>	Marriage and family life; relationships; ch Divorce, annulment. Gift of Life; parenting, family planning, stil abortion, STD's; population control Gender discrimination; complementarity o male/female roles	RE	B2: Matter of Life and Death B3: Marriage and Family Life B4: Social Harmony
<b>12-13</b>	Relationships Pregnancy; health risks of early intercourse and artificial birth regulation Sexual Health	PSHE	Activity Week Input