

3.07 RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION (3-11) & RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (11-13) POLICY

Person(s) responsible:	Headmaster/Head of PSHE/Governing Body
Last updated:	October 2023
Review period:	12 months
Next review:	October 2024

The governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, take their responsibility to provide all pupils in their care with relevant, balanced and effective Relationships Education or RE (3-11) and Relationships and Sex Education or RSE (11-13). It is essential that all children are provided with the knowledge, skills and understanding to develop into informed adolescents and adults who have happy, positive and fulfilling relationships.

This policy has been developed in consultation with:

- The school teaching staff and the wider community e.g school matron
- The designated safeguarding leads
- The school's governing body
- Meeting with representatives of the parental body
- Pupil focus groups

The policy is reviewed every year by the Headmaster, the Head of PSHE/RSE and the governing body. A copy is also sent out to all parents as part of the review process and is available on the school website. This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the school's PSHE policy (3.6). All staff are sent a copy of this policy and receive INSET training about RE/RSE.

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/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 required to teach those aspects of RE and RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

¹ 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

² Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 19

RATIONALE

‘I have come that you might have life and have it to the full’ **Jesus Christ**

(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 Wales³ and as advocated by the DFE relationships and sex education 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.

AIM OF RSE AND THE MISSION STATEMENT

Our Ethos commits us to the education of the whole child sharing with parents in the spiritual, moral and intellectual development of their children in a Catholic community, which welcomes all faiths. Our Ethos remains central to all that we do and we believe that relationship and sex education is an integral part of this education.

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.

³ Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 25

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.

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;
- how to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

A 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 RE and RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues.

Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as cover the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE (in Year 7 and 8 relating to forced-marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion, the age of consent and legislation relating to equality). 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.

EQUALITY

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.

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.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING RSE

Governors

Governors review the RSE policy, ensuring that it is in accordance with other whole school policies; e.g. SEN, the Ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs. They ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children. They also establish a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used. They ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum Science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHE.

Headteacher

The Headmaster takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Head of PSHE/RSE, the Governing Body, parents, the Diocesan Schools' Service and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies. He is supported by the Deputy Head (Organisation with Pastoral Oversight) who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and Heads of Year.

Head of PSHE/RSE

The Head of PSHE/RSE works alongside the Headmaster and oversees the day-to-day running of the department, informally observing lessons, assessing pupil development and being the point of

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contact for staff. The Head of PSHE/RSE also looks at the planning in all Year Groups to make sure that RSE is being covered appropriately and fully.

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 and regular updates are given during staff inset. All staff have been included in the development of this policy and all staff should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them.

Parents

Recognising that parents are the primary educators of their children, the school will seek to support them in this task. Parents will be consulted before this policy is ratified by the governors. Parents are also welcome to discuss RE and RSE lessons with the teaching staff and to see the material that is being used by the school. Parents/carers will be informed by letter/email about the more sensitive aspects of RE and RSE that will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning. Biannual parental RSE talks are held to keep parents informed about any major changes alongside the more regular communications.

Parents' right of withdrawal

Parents have the right to request to withdraw their children from some or all of **sex** education delivered as statutory PSHE/RSE, excepting those elements which are required by the Science National Curriculum. **There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education.**

Our procedure for this is for those parents concerned to contact the Headmaster directly to discuss this. If parents then choose to withdraw their child, this process will be documented by the school. However, we will remind parents of the words of the late Cardinal Hume. He expressed some concerns about withdrawing children from sex education lessons. He wondered whether such action might damage the parent-child relationship in terms of confidence and trust, whether it could really inhibit the passing on of information within peer groups and "might well remove one possible means of correcting, or putting in perspective, the uncontrolled information circulating within peer groups." (Cardinal Hume in a speech given at Bradford, reported in Briefing). We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed. Parents will be able to examine the programme their children are following and provide additional preparation and information as they wish.

External visitors

We will sometimes call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists, to deliver aspects of health promotion. It must however be noted that such visits will always complement the current programme, will not substitute, or replace teacher led sessions and will involve teaching which is rooted in Catholic principles and practice. In such cases, we take responsibility for checking any visiting organisations credentials.

Responsibility for teaching the programme

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lies with the Head of PSHE/RSE and relevant curriculum staff including Heads of Year and teachers of Science, Religious Education, Computing, Physical Education, RSE and PSHE.

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. All lesson plans will have a section asking teachers to think how their lesson links to the teaching of RSE.

PROVISION/PROGRAMME

The Structure and Organisation of lessons.

All pupils have at least 30 minutes of timetables PSHE/RSE lessons a week but many topics are covered at other times, such as assemblies or in services of worship or Mass.

Schemes of work for RE and RSE, are incorporated in to the PSHE schemes and are written for each year group YR to Y8. Years R to Y6 use the Jigsaw schemes of work which have been written to comply fully with government expectations of RSE. In Years 6 to 8, the current schemes of work are written internally but meet the expectations of RSE and the National Curriculum.⁴ Learning outcomes have been identified in accordance with the National Curriculum and assessment takes place at regular intervals.

The children keep a record of their learning in PSHE & RSE Journals that move with them through their time at school.

Assessment

Pupil progress is measured against a range of learning objectives, and these are recorded via our school assessment systems, 'Classroom Monitor'. At each half term, a PSHE progress grade for effort is shared with parents.

Children's questions

We want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place, ensuring 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. Some questions may raise issues which would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, e.g., where a child's questions hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature. For pupils to feel safe and secure in lessons, some ground rules need to be established.

⁴ Jigsaw 11-16, PSHE Association and Ten Ten Resources are the main source of teaching resources. All resources are carefully vetted by the PSHE team to ensure that they are comprehensive but also comply with the School's ethos and direction from the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth.

Ground Rules for PSHE/ RSE

Pupils are encouraged to be involved in establishing ground rules and are made fully aware of their responsibility for following the rules and creating an atmosphere of honesty and trust. Possible Ground Rules include: -

- We will not embarrass others
- We will not make fun of anyone
- We will allow other people time to talk
- We will use supportive language
- We will not use put-downs
- We will respect other people's right of privacy of personal information
- We will be supportive to others
- We will not ask personal questions
- We recognise that everyone has the right to be listened to
- We can 'pass' or 'opt out' if something makes us feel uncomfortable

Controversial or Sensitive issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RE and 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.

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

If a teacher has any concerns re the welfare of a particular child, then that teacher will make a dated note of their worries and liaise with the nominated persons on the staff. Any information thus obtained will be regarded as strictly confidential and will be passed to staff on a need-to-know basis only. After consultation it is the decision of the Headteacher as to whether the information is forwarded to the relevant body. 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. If there is a suspicion of possible abuse teachers will follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The Head of PSHE/RSE and the Deputy Head Academic, will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans and schemes of work. The programme should be reviewed and evaluated annually. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.