



ST. ALBAN'S
Catholic Primary School

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Relationships, Sex and health Education Policy

Updated: 4th November 2024
To be reviewed: 4th November 2025

Our Mission is

Following in the footsteps of Jesus we love, live and learn together.

And it is with this at the centre of our provision that we consider the implications for RSE in our school.

Introduction

In this policy, the Governors set out their intentions with regard to Relationship and Sex Education. We set out our rationale for and approach to sex and relationship education in the school. It is characterised by a whole person, whole school, and developmental approach thus setting it firmly within our distinctively Catholic vision of education. It is important that our children understand the God is with them in all aspects of their life, including the changes and confusion that can come with growing up and entering puberty.

The Mission and Aims of the School

Our Mission commits us to a community life with Christ at its heart and one where the whole child is central in all aspects of their development (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we recognise the importance of Family Life as a contributory factor to the development of the whole child. It should be carried out as part of the holistic education which seeks to form as well as inform young people in preparation for adult life

The work of Catholic Schools, in this area, will be the result of reflection on the Gospels and the teaching of the Church. There are two important concepts which underpin any thinking on this subject...

- The dignity and worth of each person made in the image of God
- The importance of individuals coming together in mutual support and regard, to live and work for the good of humankind and the glory of God.

It is in this context that we commit ourselves to “positive and prudent” Family Life education (‘Declaration on Christian Education’, Vatican II). St. Alban’s shares with parents the responsibility to provide positive and prudent sex and relationship education. The school aims to keep pupils safe and protect them from exploitation.

In order for Catholic RSE to be fully effective, it needs to:

- Be faithful to the Church's vision of human wholeness whilst recognising the contemporary context in which we live today
- Involve parents as they are primary educators of their child
- Provide a positive view of human sexuality and dignity of the human person
- Equip young people with the ability to make practical judgments about the right thing to do in particular circumstances
- Explore and promote virtues which are essential to promoting respect and dignity
- Be delivered in an age appropriate way which reflects the development of the child
- Be part of the cross-curricular work in both primary and secondary schools
- Be sensitive to the needs of the individual pupil and recognise the mix of pupils with different sexual orientations, genders and family backgrounds in each class
- Be taken seriously by governors and teachers as an integrated part of the broad and balanced curriculum that Catholic schools offer
- Be delivered by competent professionals who understand the Church's teaching.

Dissemination

This policy will be given to all members of the Governing Body, and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the document are available in the school office. Details of the content of the RSE curriculum will also be published on the school's web site.

Defining Sex and Relationship Education

RSE is learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the development of the pupils' knowledge and understanding of themselves, about what it means to be fully human, called to live in right relationships with self and others. It means developing pupils' abilities to make conscientious decisions about sexuality and behaviour.

Good RSE enables pupils to recognise and understand the importance of marriage and family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It has three main elements (as detailed below):

- attitudes and values
- personal and social skills
- knowledge and understanding

Rationale

We recognise our pupils as unique persons, created in the image of God, loved by God and intended to have life to the full. We willingly share, with parents, the responsibility to provide "positive and prudent" Family Life education for our pupils. We accept this responsibility in order to ensure that the information pupils receive is accurate.

Our intention is to take control of the provision of this aspect of education. We will provide a "whole person ... whole school ... developmental approach" to this curriculum ('Laying The Foundations', Bishops of England and Wales Low Week statement), to allow the Gospel message to be heard. Our aim is to keep our pupils safe and protect them from exploitation. Above all, we will provide this Family Life education out of faith and moral conviction not as a response to some crisis.

As a Catholic Primary School, we recognise the recommendation from the Catholic Education Service that sex education is given in the school within a moral, family orientated and Christian framework. It is important that, as they grow up, children come to an understanding of their own bodies, instincts and feelings. In this way they will be prepared for the opportunities, joys and responsibilities of permanent relationships.

Sex and relationships education is always taught with due regard to moral and legal considerations and with the explicit values of family life and supportive relationships.

The values which are promoted are:

- Respect for oneself and other people
- Taking responsibility for one's actions in all situations
- Honesty and loyalty in relationships
- The importance and responsibilities of the family unit for all members
- Sensitivity towards the needs and views of others
- To recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications, and risks, of certain types of behaviour
- To recognise and accept the differences of others

Aims and Objectives

To develop the following **attitudes and virtues**:

- to promote the appreciation and development of attitudes and values which are truly gospel inspired, e.g., love, truth, justice, freedom, integrity and reconciliation
- to embed a strong moral ethos and deliver quality Family Life education with the Diocesan approved “Journey of Love” document as a starting point
- 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
- awareness of contemporary realities about relationships and life in a variety of family situations

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
- ensure that pupils know protective behaviours and are empowered to keep themselves safe

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
- work with families to create a safe and supportive network for pupils to examine their thoughts and ask questions

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

- Ensure that the policy is available to parents
- Ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g., SEND, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs
- Ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children from RSE elements that are NOT part of the Nationally agreed Science curriculum
- 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 Family Life within PSHEE

Teachers

- Teach a Family Life curriculum based on Church Teaching, School Policy and the Science Outcomes expected at KS1 and KS2
- Advise governors on content and organisation of Family Life education
- Develop suitable procedures for dealing with parental requests for withdrawal
- Contribute to reviewing existing provision
- To inform parents when RSE teaching and learning is taking place so that parents are ready for the questions and discussions that will arise from what they see and hear in school
- Use professional skills in developing the curriculum
- Draw on help and guidance from relevant sources, e.g., health professionals, marriage and family life workers
- Participate in monitoring and evaluating Family Life education.

Parents

Parents, as stakeholders, can contribute towards the development of this policy before it is ratified by the governors. They will be consulted at every stage of the development of the RSE/Family Life 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 Family Life programme.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Family Life sessions excepting those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. However, we would remind parents of the words of the late Cardinal Hume. He expressed some concerns about withdrawing children from Family Life 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)

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.

Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to contact the school to meet with the Head Teacher to discuss the value and importance of a full programme – so that children learn the science alongside a deep faith based awareness of family life in all its forms.

Responsibility

Responsibility for the RSE programme rests with the governors. The Headteacher carries delegated responsibility and is supported in the oversight of the programme by the SLT. All staff carry some responsibility for the selected Family Life programme.

Organisation

The three aspects of Family Life Education are

- attitudes and values
- knowledge and understanding
- personal and social skills

These elements will be delivered to pupils in three inter-related ways: the whole school / ethos dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific Family Life curriculum. The curriculum is identified on the PSHEE overview and is taught at the same time in all classes.

Programme

Pupils in all classes follow the “Journey of Love” book which looks at RSE in 4 strands. All pupils in all classes do this work at the same time to support family discussion (Parents will be advised in the curriculum newsletter)

- Physical
- Social
- Emotional
- Intellectual

In each year group the pupils have a core theme:

- **RECEPTION** - God loves each of us in our uniqueness
Children know and understand that God has made them unique and that although we are all different we are all special to him.
- **YEAR ONE** - We meet God's love in our family
Children know and understand that they are growing and developing as members of their own family and God's family.
- **YEAR TWO** - We meet God's love in the community
Children know and understand that they are growing and developing in a God-given community.
- **YEAR THREE** - How we live in love
Children know and understand the virtues essential to friendship e.g. loyalty, responsibility and experience the importance both of forgiving and being forgiven and of celebrating God's forgiveness.
- **YEAR FOUR** - God loves us in our differences
Children know and understand that they are all different and celebrate these differences as they appreciate that God's love accepts us as we are and as we change.
- **YEAR FIVE** - God's love in my changing and development
Children know and become aware of the physical and emotional changes that accompany puberty-sensitivity, mood swings, anger, boredom, etc.
They grow further in their understanding of God's presence in their daily lives.
- **YEAR SIX** - The wonder of God's love in creating new life
Children develop, in an appropriate way for their age, an understanding of sexuality and grow further in their appreciation of their dignity and worth as children of God.

Each unit has activities, time for reflection and questioning and very importantly time for prayer. More information can be found on the school website to show families the details of each year group content

and how to support at home (you can see what has been delivered). Many Catholic Secondary Schools use the second volume of this programme with the older pupils.

Staffing

All staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the Family Life 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.

Responsibility for the Family Life programme lies with the relevant curriculum staff and class teachers as it is a holistic approach. This will normally include science, religious education, RSE and PSHEE.

Teaching strategies will include

- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- active learning
- brainstorming
- film & video
- group work
- role-play
- case studies
- checklists
- values clarification
- dealing with questions: answer, defer, delay, refer to others, e.g., parent, pastoral staff, counsellor, health professional

Relationship to other policies / initiatives

This RSE/Family Life Policy is to be delivered as part of the RE curriculum with links made to the PSHEE framework and Science. Written evidence is kept in the RE or PSHEE books.

Inclusion

It is important that all pupils have the knowledge and skills to make informed choices about how they develop relationships as they get older. 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.

Safeguarding

Children need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which sex and relationship education takes place and in school we will endeavour to make sure that this safe environment is provided. Effective sex and relationship education will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. Where a teacher has any concerns about the risk to a child they will follow the schools Safeguarding/Child Protection policy and immediately inform the designated member of staff.

Guidelines

The governors recognise that Family Life Education can be a sensitive issue for all concerned and are concerned that teachers' training and support needs are properly provided for. The governors therefore require the school to provide such training and support to all those involved in the Family Life Education programme. This training will cover legislative requirements, Church teaching, the demands of this policy and the development of appropriate skills to deliver the Family Life Education programme.

Children and young people will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place. Effective Family Life Education will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a child protection 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 is a victim of or is at risk of abuse they should follow the school's child protection policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

Children's questions

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which Family Life Education 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. Some questions may raise issues which it 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. Sensitive issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of Family Life Education. These may be 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 – removing knowledge creates a danger to pupils in terms of safeguarding themselves. The programme will deal with these issues sensitively, in a broad and balanced way, free from sensationalism and personal bias, at a level appropriate to the needs and experience of pupils.

Account will be taken of different viewpoints. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. Pupils will be made aware of both Church teaching and the law as they relate to the issues.

Children may ask questions about societal perspectives on relationships during these lessons. Staff will acknowledge the choices of others to create family units in ways other than the traditional family unit, and will discuss love as a broad reflection of the reality in our communities but teaching will always reiterate Catholic teaching and principles.

Sex Education Notes for Guidance - Answering questions from children

Questions should only be invited from the children in the context of work they have been involved in – i.e. watching a video, part of a topic. It is better to ask the children to generate questions as a group and ask them to be written down. The teacher is then able to group the questions under appropriate headings.

Children should be encouraged not to use "slang" or "family" names and terms. The teacher should always use correct biological terminology. This may mean that a teacher has to interpret a question before reading it out and answering it

Where a question is deemed inappropriate either because it is not connected to the subject matter being dealt with or because it goes beyond the scope of the school sex education policy / contrary to Church teachings / age / stage of development of the pupils, the teacher must either decide to

- leave those questions to the end and invite children who have not had their questions answered to speak to the teacher on their own
- explain that they are only answering questions on a particular topic. In either case the most appropriate action would be for the teacher to suggest that the child asks his / her parents

Where a child asks a question about sex, out of the context of sex education lessons or a related topic the teacher should speak to the child individually to try to ascertain what has prompted the question e.g. "Why did you want to know that?" The teacher can then respond in one of the ways suggested above.

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/Family Life Education programme, will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of Family Life, 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 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. Following consultation with the Headteacher they will be able to inform pupils that they can obtain further advice from health professionals, e.g., the school nurse, school counsellor, their GP, or the local young person's advice service.

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, Headteacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

In the exceptional cases where the school will find itself handling such information without parental knowledge the Headteacher and governor will keep appropriate records and monitor the frequency of such cases. This monitoring will form part of the Headteacher's and governors' on-going monitoring and evaluation of the RSE policy.

Monitoring, review and evaluation

The Family Life Education 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 should be reviewed and evaluated biannually by means of questionnaires / response sheets 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.

Withdrawing Children from RSE

Parents have a legal right to withdraw their child from the RSE lessons that take place in school however they have no right to withdraw their child from National Curriculum Science or any other subject that may deal with these themes.

Parents and carers will always be informed before the RSE schemes of work are delivered to children. The diocesan teaching materials and resources are available to parents to view upon request to the RE Coordinator.

We would like to make it clear that if pupils are withdrawn from RSE lessons but ask questions at other times, these questions will be answered honestly by staff, in line with their usual approach to questions from children.

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 for visitors, developed in line with CES guidance 'Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools'.

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.

Monitoring & Evaluation

This policy will be monitored and evaluated on the annual cycle of Policy development.

Review Date: November 2025

Person Responsible: Mrs McKinney Headteacher

Queries about the content of this policy should be addressed to the Head Teacher