



ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

*To lead those in our care to grow in their faith
and to benefit from an enriching education*

RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

Principles

“...The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.”

1 Corinthians 6:13

Defining Relationships and Sex Education

DfE guidance¹ 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”. RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, healthy lifestyles, sexual health, sexuality diversity and personal identity. RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Ethos

Relationships Education, Sex Education, and Health Education are interrelated and are compulsory in all secondary schools, as from September 2020. The Catholic Church, in documents published by the Vatican² and the statements of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales³, emphasise that schools have a particular duty to support parents in educating their children about sex, sexuality and relationships. Relationships and sex education (SRE) focuses on exploring the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, having friendships and relationships, engaging in sex, and learning about human sexuality and sexual health. According to Department for Education guidance¹, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) should be set in the context of clear values, including the value of family life, marriage, and of loving, stable relationships. It should teach young people to develop values, attitudes, personal and social skills, and help them to increase their knowledge so that they are empowered to make safe, healthy, legal and informed decisions and life choices.

In drawing up this policy we have consulted with parents and pupils so that we better serve the young people of our community. We are clear that sexism, misogyny, misandry, homophobia, harassment, sexual violence and gender stereotypes should be challenged and we will take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled. Tolerance, equality and respect for all will be a central feature of the way we educate our children.

In accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church, we believe that sexual relationships should primarily be understood in the context of marriage and family life. Education in sexuality is framed in the context of our knowledge that human relationships are threatened by disorder and that is only with God's grace that we can sustain his

intentions for us⁵. We believe that physical, moral and intellectual qualities should develop harmoniously, and that children and young people are entitled to a positive and prudent education in matters relating to sex, sexuality and sexual health. Furthermore, we believe that children and young people are unique, formed in God's image and have the right to make independent, informed moral judgements.

We recognise that children and young people grown up in a society which contains many examples of harmful attitudes towards sexuality and human relationships, and that they themselves may share such attitudes. As such, the provision of education should attend to the needs of our pupils, always directed to the formation of the whole person, rather than the mere provision of information.⁶

We recognise that parents/carers have the prime responsibility in teaching their children to build healthy, loving relationships. We recognise the challenges faced by many young people with the physical and emotional processes of growing to adulthood, and the responsibilities brought about by sexual maturity.

In order for our pupils to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress into adulthood it is important they have knowledge about sexual health and safer sex. This should be conveyed in a factual and non-judgemental environment, which gives scope for pupils to ask questions. RSE is underpinned by the school's wider values in the hope of cultivating in our pupils, traits such as, faithfulness, integrity, compassion, humility, justice, forgiveness, holiness, tolerance and service.

We acknowledge that some parents/carers do not feel able to discuss sexual matters freely with their children. We are committed to our responsibility of ensuring our pupils are prepared for adult life through the provision of a broad RSE curriculum. It is our aim that the RSE curriculum complements and supports parents/carers in their responsibilities

Aims of RSE

We aim to:

- Enable all pupils to develop an awareness of, an understanding of, and sensitivity to, their own and others sexuality.
- Provide opportunities for all pupils to reflect on their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in the light of the external truths contained in the teachings of Christ. Develop pupils' awareness of the sanctity of the human body as a unique creation in God's image.
- Enable pupils to develop conjugal and other relationships based on mutual respect, dignity and responsibility, free from any abuse.
- Develop in pupils, self-esteem, mental well-being and confidence in their sexuality.
- Support our pupils through their physical, emotional and moral development and encourage self-reflection.
- Emphasise the importance of working in partnership with the Church, Governors, parents and the wider community.
- Address all sensitive matters in a professional manner.
- provide information that is both balanced and factual;

- ensure that pupils understand the importance of consent and the legal framework surrounding it.

Objectives of RSE

To meet our objectives, we shall provide RSE through the religious education programme of study, the science programme of study, and through sessions tailored to the needs of each year group and to the ability of pupils. The DFE guidance¹, identifies the following areas of study viz. Personal Identities; Healthy Lifestyles; Risk; Relationships and Diversity; and these are incorporated into our programmes of study. We will map the provision and responsibility areas for each, so that relationships education, sex education and health education programmes complement, and do not unnecessarily duplicate, content covered in other areas. Please see the provision map attached to this document, setting out the topics covered at each key stage (appendix one).

In taught sessions we shall tailor provision to ensure it is accessible to all pupils (including those with special educational needs) and strive to ensure the content is both age appropriate and sensitive. RSE will be inclusive and relevant to those who may identify as LGBT+ and discussion of these and related issues will be part of the curriculum.

Additionally, content will:

- Give an understanding of puberty, reproduction and transition to adulthood.
- Teach about sexual health and support services in line with Catholic teaching.
- Advise about delaying sexual activity and the benefits of loving chastely.
- Advise about the law and what it says about consent, definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment, female genital mutilation, pornography and images, and choices permitted by the law around pregnancy.
- Advocate the avoidance of underage sexual activity despite external pressures and the influence of the media and Internet.
- Promote self-respect and self-worth, recognising that each of us is created in the image of God.
- Enable students to understand that love (as described in I Corinthians 13) is central to meaningful relationships.
- Encourage students to be better aware of their own attitudes, values and responsibilities by extolling the virtues of marriage, family life and thereby supporting stable and loving relationships. Teaching the value of respect, love and care.
- Give opportunities to explore, consider and understand moral dilemmas.
- Facilitate an understanding of, and sensitivity to, the sexuality, belief, values and cultures of others.
- Provide a forum where pupils can share their concerns and create a climate of support such that pupils know they will be listened to sensitively.
- Enable pupils to appreciate the consequences of the choices they make and the importance of taking responsibility for their decisions. Provide opportunities to learn about the implications of various forms of drug abuse in relation to sexual behaviour.
- Provide information on contraception, sexually transmitted diseases and signpost further sources of support with regard to sexual health.

Engaging Stakeholders

Parents/Guardians/Carers

In drawing up this policy we have consulted with parents and pupils so that we better serve the young people of our community. We are clear that sexism, misogyny, misandry, homophobia, harassment, sexual violence and gender stereotypes should be challenged and we will take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled. Tolerance, equality and respect for all will be a central feature of the way we educate our children. The staff of St Thomas More School are committed to working closely with parents, guardians and carers in order to deliver meaningful RSE which helps to prepare our pupils for adult life.

Parents/carers may withdraw their children from those parts of the school programme that are not compulsory (i.e. not from Relationships or Health Education). The Head of School should be contacted for further information should parents/carers wish to exercise this right.

Governors

Department for Education guidance¹ makes specific requests of Governors, alongside their duty to fulfil their broader, legal obligations. Governors are required to ensure that:

- All pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes.
- RSE is well led, effectively managed and well planned.
- The quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation.
- Teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND.
- Clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn.
- RSE is well resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

Monitoring and Review

The RSE curriculum will be monitored by the Headteacher, the Head of Religious Education and the member of staff responsible for Personal, Social and Health Education and Healthy Schools and the Head of Science.

The day-to-day operation of the policy is the remit of the designated member of staff for responsible Personal, Social and Health Education. Students and parents will be sampled as to their opinions as to the quality and content of RSE input.

A report will be made at least annually to Governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Pregnancy Policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually and approved by Governors.

FOOTNOTES

1. Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers (2020)
2. 'The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education within the Family' (1995), The Pontifical Council for the Family; 'Amoris Laetitia' (2016), Vatican Press

3. 'Learning to Love' (2017), The Bishops' Conference of England & Wales
4. 'Sex and Relationships Education Guidance' (2000), Department for Education (Ref:DfEE 0116/2000)
5. The Catechism of the Catholic Church CCC 1606-1607
6. Educational Guidance in Human Love – Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. Catholic Truth Society 1983

This policy was agreed on 7 December 2004
This policy was reviewed on 7 November 2005
This policy was reviewed on 3 May 2007
This policy was reviewed on 20 June 2011
This policy was reviewed on 9 June 2016
This policy was reviewed on 12 December 2017
This policy was reviewed on 2nd July 2019
This policy was reviewed on 30th June 2020
This policy was reviewed on 29th June 2021