St Thomas the Apostle School & Sixth Form College

Policy for Relationships & Sex Education

Agreed by Headteacher: May 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

St Thomas the Apostle exists as a distinct community because it has Christ as its foundation. His teachings and example are the basis for its daily life, relationships and future hopes. We meet Christ in all aspects of the life of the school and the spiritual dimension underpins all its work. The attitudes and values of the school are those of Christ's radical command to *love one another as I have loved you* (Jn 13:34), where this love means growing in the ability to love God, oneself and others. This policy has been written taking into account the Diocesan Policy for Relationships and Sex Education of 2016. The Diocese reminds us that "The Second Vatican Council spoke of the need for "a positive and prudent sex education" to be imparted to children and adolescents as they grow older" so that their sexuality may be directed through a process of growth in self-knowledge and self-control to enable them to have a capacity for joy and fulfilment.

As a Catholic school, our formation in this area is based on our faith in God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ and seeks to foster understanding of respectful and loving relationships including friendships, marriage, and family life. AS the term 'Relationships and Sex Education' (RSE) indicates, the emphasis is placed on the understanding and formation of respectful, loving relationships which exist between friends and within families. Understanding how relationships work and developing relationship skills gives a context for understanding human sexuality and human sexual health. This is consistent with the Church's view that the purpose of RSE is to secure "an adequate knowledge of nature and importance of sexuality and of the harmonious and integral development of the persona towards psychological maturity, with full spiritual maturity in view, to which all believers are called" (The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, Education Guidance in Human Love November 1983).

2. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

This policy is in accordance with the Diocesan Policy for Relationships and Sex Education 2020 which in turn refers to the DfE Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (SRE) (2019), the Education Act 1996, the Learning and Skills Act 2000, and the Marriage Act 2013.

The statutory requirements relating to SRE are contained within different parts of United Kingdom legislation. They can be summarised as follows.

- All maintained primary and secondary schools must teach the SRE elements of the National Curriculum Science Order.
- All maintained secondary schools must provide SRE as part of the basic curriculum, including as a minimum education about HIV, AIDS and STIs and the national curriculum content about human growth and reproduction.
- All maintained primary and secondary schools must have an up to date policy for SRE, even if the policy (in the primary phase) is not to provide such a programme.

● Parents cannot withdraw children from relationships education at both primary and secondary. They have a right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex education provided, but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction as required by the National Curriculum Science Order. However, a child also has the right to opt into sex education from their 15th birthday (specifically three academic terms before they turn 16).
● When providing SRE all schools must implement the Sex and Relationship Education Guidance published in 2019.

The Learning and Skills Act 2000 requires that:
● Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provision except the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under the National Curriculum Science Order.
● Young people learn about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children.
● Young people are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate, having regard to age and cultural background.
● When providing RSE schools have regard to the Sex and Relationship Education Guidance of the DfE 2000

- The Archdiocese of Southwark states that Age appropriate RSE should be part of the curriculum in all schools in this diocese

Students must be aware that the Marriage Act 2013 extends civil marriage to same sex couples in England and Wales. Nothing in the act affects a Catholic schools' right to teach on marriage or on same sex relationships in accordance with the norms of the Catholic Church, as long as this is done in an appropriate and sensitive way.

3. ROLES

Parents
The school and Church recognise that parents are the first teachers of their children. It is their right and responsibility to inform and educate their children in matters relating to human relationships and sexual development. St Thomas the Apostle College seeks to help parents in their task and work in partnership with them. Parents are welcome to discuss the content of any programme of RSE that will be delivered and resources that are planned to be used.

Members of staff responsible
The head of PSHCE and the Head of RE have overall responsibility, and works in collaboration with the Headteacher and Link Governor, as well as the heads of department for Science, Assistant head in charge of e-Safety and the chaplaincy team. These members of staff will be responsible for the subject content, how it is taught and who is responsible for teaching it. They will also ensure that it is monitored and evaluated in collaboration with headteacher.

RSE will be fully integrated into the curriculum and will be taught across a multitude of subjects, including RE, Information Technology, Science and PE. This

will furthermore be supported by PSHCE days, whole school programmes such as the First Aid programme, assemblies and and weekly current affairs sessions. Therefore, all teachers will be responsible for delivery. Those responsible for RSE will ensure that delivery of the content is accessible to all pupils, including those with SEND.

RSE will prepare young people for an adult life in which they can:
● Value the beauty and purpose of their God given sexuality;
● Develop positive attitudes and a moral framework that will guide their judgements decisions and behaviour;
● Understand the arguments for reserving sexual activity until marriage;
● Understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships;
● Have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others;
● Communicate effectively;
● Avoid being exploited or exploiting others;

Sex education will be taught within the context of relationships and within the wider context of the whole curriculum with Catholic moral and spiritual foundations at the centre of all teaching. All subjects have a role to play and all members of the school community, by virtue of the relationships they foster within the school, contribute to education in sexuality for which clear guidance is given. The school does not provide information, advice or services to facilitate artificial birth control or abortion.
Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE 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.

The lead teachers for RSE will oversee the planning of the curriculum, Continuing Professional Development, training and support for teachers. They will ensure that parents are informed about RSE in the school. RSE will be developed in different curriculum areas, therefore different heads of department will be responsible for different subject areas and will make parents aware of the content being taught if they should have the right to withdraw.

Teachers and other adults – RSE is a whole school issue that all staff will be involved in to ensure that our students develop the personal and social skills that contribute to human flourishing. All staff will deliver content in the classroom but will also be role models around the school, giving examples of conflict resolution and establish relationships of mutual trust and respect. All staff have a responsibility of care and safeguarding of pupils. They will actively contribute to the guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of our students. This work will be in line with the school's Catholic ethos and current legislation.

4. AIMS OF RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

RSE aims to secure "an adequate knowledge of the nature and importance of sexuality and of the harmonious and integral development of the person towards psychological maturity, with full spiritual maturity in view, to which all believers are called." (Educational Guidance in Human Love 1983)
"It is about 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." DfE Sex and Relationship Education Guidance 2000
"Sex education should provide information while keeping in mind that children and young people have not yet attainment full maturity. The information has to come at a proper time and in a way suited to their age" Libreria Editrice Vatican Amoris Laetitia: The Joy of Love (19th March 2019)
To ensure that we provide children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education" effective RSE must ensure that:

1. Pupils have clear, accurate and sound knowledge
2. Church teachings are presented in a forthright and clear manner, using the specific references provided by the Church
3. In presentation of both knowledge and Church teachings, age appropriateness and the awareness of child development must be key. Instruction should match the child's developmental level and must be aware of individual differences.

RSE is a journey into the very essence of what it means to love as a person who is made in the image and likeness of God who is love. It involves the integration of sexuality within the life of a person so that they may have life to the full. The school, together with the Catholic Church understands marriage to be a mutual commitment of total fidelity which is open to life.

5. OBJECTIVES

● To provide knowledge and understanding of the Church's teaching on relationships and sexual love
● To provide a positive understanding of what constitutes good and loving relationships.
● To provide a knowledge and understanding of the biological facts about human reproduction.
● To provide young people with the inner strength to make sound, moral choices in a culture which may pressurise them to be sexually active.
● To provide an understanding of sexual health including sexually transmitted infections.
● To provide a clear understanding of the Catholic Church's teaching on fertility and human love and the Church's teaching to reserve sexual intercourse for marriage.
● Know how the law applies to sexual relationships.
● To understand the difference between natural family planning and artificial

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

6. RESOURCES & EXTERNAL SPEAKERS

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body, working with the Headteacher and Head of RE and PSHCE to ensure that RSE is in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church and to ensure that this is achieved through careful monitoring of resources. The following should be taken into account:
● Parents and carers need support by a provision which is faithful to the Church's teaching and age-appropriate.
● The extent to which resources illustrate the beauty of the human being created by God.
● The values which are implied by a resource and the way they enhance students' understanding of human development and Catholic teaching.
● Accuracy and clarity of what is being presented.

External visitors should complement the school's provision of RSE and be mindful of the Church's teachings. They should be clear about the nature of the school and their role and responsibility.

7. CONTENT OF THE RSE PROGRAMME

SRE provides knowledge and information, encourages the acquisition of skills and the consideration of attitudes and values which will allow students to manage their lives in a responsible and healthy way.

Knowledge and information

Students are to be taught the statutory topics listed below:
Families
Respectful relationships
Online and media
Being safe
Intimate relationships
The law

Supplementary topics in response to the needs of the students based on pupil, teacher or parent feedback will also be covered.

Skills and abilities

St Thomas the Apostle College

Students will be helped to develop a range of personal and social skills needed for relationships with family and friends including;
Negotiation skills;
Decision making skills;
Assertiveness skills;

Listening skills; Being able to recognise and resist pressure;
Being able to discuss relationships;
Dealing with loss, separation and/or bereavement;
Skills in challenging prejudice;
Recognising and using opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle;

A full scheme of work for the RSE content and delivery process can be found on the school website.

8. THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

The Church stipulates that parents and guardians are the prime educators of their children. Parents and guardians will be informed in advance of the timing of sex education sessions and may view on request any materials used. Parents have a statutory right to withdraw their children from any sex education outside the National Curriculum requirements. If a pupil is excused from sex education, it is our responsibility to ensure that the pupil receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw however from the Relationships Education or Health Education in accordance with the DfE Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (SRE) (2019). Parents do not have the right to withdraw from the Science curriculum. In addition, there is provision for a child to choose not to be withdrawn 3 terms before they turn 16.

9. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS 2020

The values mission, and ethos of the school is made explicit in all aspects of RSE programme of study. Every aspect has been reviewed to ensure the school meets all of the statutory requirements which came into force from September 2020.

Schools are required to consult with parents when developing and reviewing their policies for Relationships Education. What is taught is ultimately a decision for the school informed by parent's views.

10. Updates

11th May 2023

Policy was reviewed to ensure that all of the statutory requirements have been met by the policy.

The PSHCE and RSE curriculum have been mapped across curriculum subjects, drop-down days, assembly programme and other events such as Ethos Award, First Aid Training and diversity days to ensure full coverage.