



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Approved by: The Governing Body

Date: Advent 2023

Last reviewed on: Advent 2023

Next review due by: Advent 2025



ST. BERNADETTE'S

CATHOLIC PRIMARY VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

Mission Statement

Jesus said: "I am the Light of the World."

By the Light of Jesus Christ, God reveals to each of us who He is.
God is Love, and His Love is revealed in Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.
God's Love is revealed in His Creation, in our beautiful world, in His Holy Catholic Church,
in our families, in our friends, and in every human person, and we welcome all in the Holy Name of Jesus.

At St. Bernadette's, we believe that every child is a precious gift from God to each of our families,
created in His own image and likeness so as to radiate His Love, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

We believe that every child has been blessed by God's grace to know Him and love Him,
and to know of God's infinitely deep and abiding love for each of His children.

We believe that every child has been created to strive for excellence in all aspects of life,
and when united in friendship with Jesus, they are empowered to reflect the Light of Christ to the world.

Jesus said: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

"I have come so that they may have life, and have it to the full."

Jesus is the Way, so let us walk in His footsteps of Love and Friendship, and follow His example of Goodness.

Jesus is the Truth, so let us listen to what He says, believe His teachings, and profess His Gospel.

Jesus is the Life, so let us live by His commandments to love God, and love our neighbour.

When we do these things, Jesus will help us to lead the life He wants us to have, 'and have it to the full'.
Just as Jesus said that He is 'the Cornerstone' on which we should build our whole lives, in the same way,
our Cornerstone Values, centred on Christ, provide the firm foundation for all that we do in our academy.

Our Cornerstone Values

- 1 **Love** – To love God with all our heart, soul, and mind; and to love our neighbour as Jesus loves us.
- 2 **Virtue and Goodness** – To grow in virtue, becoming more like Jesus in what we think, say, and do.
To be well-behaved and well-mannered; courteous and polite; kind and forgiving.
- 3 **Prayer and Service** – To be friends with Jesus through prayer and devotion, liturgy, and worship of God.
To live out the Gospel in service of others – family, academy, parish, and the wider community.
- 4 **Radiance** – To enkindle our God-given gifts and talents, so that we may shine like bright stars for all to see.
- 5 **Joy** – To aspire to be happy, cheerful, and healthy; confident yet humble; compassionate and heroic.
- 6 **Wonder** – To be inspired by a spirit of enquiry and wonder, taking delight in creativity and discovery.
- 7 **Excellence** – To strive for excellence, and have high aspirations to work hard and achieve our very best.

Upon entering our academy, children are welcomed into a loving, caring, safe, and nurturing environment,
beginning a journey with us through which they will grow and mature, blossom and flourish.

'Striving for excellence in all that we do, reflecting the Light of Christ to the world.'

Our academy motto expresses our commitment to excellence in every aspect of academy life.

We help our families to form their children by providing a well-rounded education,
full of challenge and rigour; fun and creativity; excitement and wonder.

We believe that every child is unique and special, created by God for a special reason,
with a unique mission – a vocation which God is calling them towards – and we believe that God has blessed
each child with the character, gifts, and talents to help them succeed and be happy in their mission.

At St. Bernadette's, it is our honour and our passion to help, support, and encourage each child
to fulfil their God-given potential, and ready them to contribute positively to society in service of others.

Walking in footsteps of love with Jesus, following the example of Our Lady of Lourdes and Saint Bernadette,
may each child come to know of their special place in God's Heart, and when 'Heart speaks unto heart',
may each child have the trust and confidence to pray the words of this prayer by Blessed John Henry Newman:

'God has created me to do Him some definite service.

He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.

I have my mission.'



SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions about relationships and sex education (RSE). We set out our rationale for, and approach to relationships and sex education in the school.

Consultation

Prior to creating this policy the following steps were followed:

- Consultation with academy staff

The new Life to the Full diocesan approved curriculum developed by the Ten:Ten Group was scrutinised as a working curriculum programme.

- Consultation with governors

The leadership team consulted with members of the governing body concerning policy, curriculum and parental consultation.

- Consultation with parents

Following the diocesan advice and using the Ten:Ten resources parents were consulted. They were able to access the curriculum outline and access a selection of teaching materials. Their voice was shared in the form of a questionnaire, which was disseminated and acted upon by the leadership team.

Implementation and Review of Policy

Implementation of the policy will take place after consultation with the Governors in the Advent Term 2023.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Head teacher, RSE Subject Leader, the Governing Body and Staff.

The next review date is Advent 2025.

Dissemination

The policy will be sent to all members of the Governing Body, and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. A paper copy will be available in the school office. The policy will be accessible to parents via the Academy website as well as details of the content of the RSE curriculum.

DEFINING RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

The DfE guidance 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”¹. It is about the development of the pupil’s knowledge and understanding of her or 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. As a primary academy the focus will be on “teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults.”² This will include the topics of families and the people who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

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, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 19

STATUTORY CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science.

However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

RATIONALE

‘I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL’

(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 relationships 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 Wales and as advocated by the DFE (and the Welsh Assembly Government) RSE 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. It will also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

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.

AIM OF RSE AND THE MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, our school aims state that we will endeavour to raise pupils' self-esteem, help them to grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of all persons and develop caring and sensitive attitudes. It is in this context that we commit ourselves:

In partnership with parents, to provide children and young people with a “positive and prudent sexual education”³ which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

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.

³ *Gravissimum Educationis*

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;

Outcomes

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. This policy links to the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Trust Equality Policy.

EQUALITIES OBLIGATIONS

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.

BROAD CONTENT OF RSE

Three aspects of RSE - attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills will be provided in three inter-related ways: the whole school / ethos dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific relationships and sex curriculum.

PROGRAMME / RESOURCES

Appendices to this policy provide further information about the programme and resources for suggested use. They include:

- Appendix 1 PSHE-RSE Whole Academy Coverage Plan
- Appendix 2a EYFS RSE Full Coverage Plan
- Appendix 2b Key Stage 1 RSE Full Coverage Plan
- Appendix 2c Key Stage 2 RSE Full Coverage Plan

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- experiential
- active
- thought showers

- film & video
- group work
- role-play
- trigger drawings
- values clarification

ASSESSMENT

Assessment will be carried out, at the end of each unit of work, by the class teacher. Assessment will be recorded and tracked using the academy assessment tools. The Religious Education Leader will be responsible for monitoring and tracking progress throughout the key stages.

PARENTS AND CARERS

We recognise that parents (and other carers who stand in their place) are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children. Therefore the school will support parents and carers by providing material to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help parents/carers to find out more. Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning.

Parents were consulted before this policy was ratified by the governors. They were consulted at every stage of the development of the RSE programme, as well as during the process of monitoring, review and evaluation. They will continue to be able to view the resources used by the school in the RSE programme. Our aim is always to ensure that every parent and carer has full confidence in the school's RSE programme to meet their child's needs.

Parents continue to have **the right to withdraw** their children from Sex Education except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the headteacher. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning.

We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed. Please refer to the DfE guidance Page 17 for further details on the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw).

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 RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE. 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.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHING THE PROGRAMME

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lays with Andrew Strong (RSE and RE Leader) and Michaela Hanly (PSHE Leader and Science Leader).

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.

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 developed in line with CES guidance 'Checklist for External Speakers to Schools' ⁴.

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.

OTHER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING RSE

Governors

- draw up the RSE policy, in consultation with parents and teachers;
- ensure that the policy is available to parents;
- ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g., SEN, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs;
- ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children;
- 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 RSE within PSHE.

Headteacher

The Head teacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, the Diocesan Schools' Service and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

PSHE/RSE Leaders

The leaders with the head teacher have a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to RSE and the provision of in-service training. *(They may be supported by the curriculum deputy and the member of staff with responsibility for child protection).*

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

⁴ CES Checklist for External Speakers to Schools, 2016

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. 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.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

This RSE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHE framework. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents including:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy,
- Behaviour Policy,
- SEN Policy,
- Equality Policy,
- Online Safety Policy,
- Pupil Wellbeing Policy.

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.

Learning about RSE in PSHE classes, following the Jigsaw scheme of work will link to learning in those areas identified in the RSE audit.

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE 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 and young people.

Controversial or Sensitive issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE. These may be matters 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. (See also Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, Managing difficult questions, Page 23 for more detail)

Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, e.g., where a child or young person's questions hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE AT RISK

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

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 programme, will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and sex, 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/carers 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. 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 circumstances 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

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The RSE Leader 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 will be evaluated biannually by means of questionnaires / response sheets / needs assessment 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.