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Mar 2016	1.2	Spring 2018	

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School
A Catholic Voluntary Academy
Sex and Relationship Policy

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

In our Catholic School we provide a:

Safe, loving and enriching environment

Trust, and patience

Motivation to reach individual's full potential

Acceptance and celebration of uniqueness

Respect for all

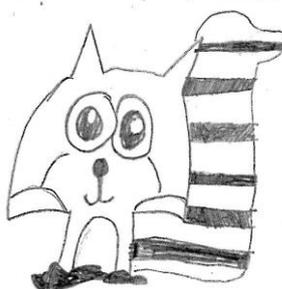
Young people nurtured in the Spirit of God.

School full of awe and wonder

St. Mary's School is a Rights Respecting School and as such the needs and well being of our children are at the heart of all policies in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 24

You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well..



INTRODUCTION

The aim of this guidance is to support the teaching of sex and relationship education (SRE) by presenting a rationale and approach which is both authentically catholic and in accordance with educational principles.

“As the image of God we are created for love”

The work of Catholic Schools, in this area, will be informed by reflection on the Scriptures, the words and actions of Christ and the teaching of the Church. There are three important concepts which underpin any thinking on this subject.

- The dignity and worth of each person made in the image of God. ***“Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary.”***
- We are called to love and be loved, ***“God is love and whoever lives in love lives in God”***
- We are called to form relationships to live in community ***“wherever two or more of you are gathered in my name there I am”***

Pupils in our schools come from different backgrounds. The children have different life experiences, different maturation rates and different levels of sexual awareness. The pressures and influences on them from society and the media, often subliminal, cannot be underestimated. The school must be ready to accompany them on their journey to adulthood, modelling for them and enabling them to become capable of whole and wholesome relationships, and discerning their calling. Above all the school needs to help them understand that they are loved by God and capable of loving. Our response to Government initiatives on Sex and Relationships Education (S.R.E.) must be guided by our vision of what it means to be human and our claims to educate the whole person and the need to address issues raised by the actual experience of pupils today.

‘... children and young people should be helped to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual qualities ... they should be given a positive and prudent education in matters relating to sex’

2. Defining Sex and Relationship Education

The DfE guidance defines SRE as ***“lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity”***

The DfE document identifies three main elements: attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding. This guidance recognises the need for relationship and sex education to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. In Catholic schools teaching about relationships is not, however, simply a response to a government initiative; we do not teach this because it is a legal requirement.

We teach about relationships because relationships are the core of who we are and how we respond to God’s love.

3. A Rationale for Sex and Relationship Education

Our Christian understanding of what it means to be human

We are involved in Sex and Relationship Education precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person: The interior life of God is a community of persons. We are made in God's image and therefore destined to live in relationships with others, to form community; called to love and be loved.

In Jesus, God became man and dwelt amongst us. He became human body and soul and there is no greater value that can be given to us.

We are called to love because God first loved us. For most people that love finds expression in the self-giving of body and spirit.

“Sexuality is a fundamental component of personality, one of its modes of being, of communicating with others, of feeling, of expressing and of living human love.”

In the society we live in, however, there is often a distorted view of human sexuality. It is often relegated to merely a human appetite; sex is separated from relationships, reduced to its lowest form. The dignity of the human person, the value of life, the need to form community, these tenets of Christianity are often lost in a culture which places a high value on the individual. God's love is the model for our human love and this requires right and loving relationships. In developing our relationship education, therefore, the following approach is suggested:

- **Parents are the first teachers of their children.** Any programme of relationship education should be discussed with parents and involve parents.
- **It should be a developmental programme.** Appropriate to the age and development of young people, helping them to grow in understanding, to reflect critically on information given to them and enable them to make right judgements within the circumstances of their lives.
- **It should be a whole person approach.** Not simply based on biological facts but grounded in our views on the whole person, placed in the context of our beliefs.
- **It should be a whole school approach.** Attitudes are formed and values truly appreciated by the total experience of life in school, through both the formal and the 'hidden' curriculum. These attitudes and values develop as a result of relationships between pupils and staff. Consequently, while a senior member of staff should be responsible for the development and co-ordination of the necessary programmes, it should also be seen as a responsibility shared by the whole staff, with the whole range of curriculum contributing to the formation of right attitudes in our children and young people.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Parents:

Parents are the first and best educators of their children and the school needs to support parents in this role and work in partnership with them. There should be meetings and information given to parents about the programme and resources which will be used.

Parents should be able to examine the programme their children are following. Parents will be encouraged to talk to their children about lessons at school and to listen to their questions and thoughts.

They have the right to be consulted before any policy document and programme is ratified by the governors. They have the right to withdraw their children from sex and relationship education, except those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. Should they wish to do so they must notify the school.

Governors:

Governors have the responsibility for ensuring there is a sex and relationship education policy, drawn up in consultation with parents and teachers, which is in keeping with Catholic teaching. If necessary, they need to provide guidelines for the teaching of sensitive issues. They must ensure that the policy is available to parents and that parents know of their right to withdraw their children. Governors must provide sufficient training and resources to see that the topic is taught correctly, creatively and sensitively. They must ensure that the programme and the resources are monitored and evaluated. This monitoring applies both to the taught curriculum and the wider areas of school life e.g. careers, school nurse. **Since all curriculum areas will impact at least indirectly on this area, it is important governors provide training and inset for all staff to help them understand the Church's teaching in this area.**

Teachers:

All adult members of the school community are role models and educators in this dimension of pupils' education. The teacher's role, in particular, is to value and affirm all pupils; actively to promote open and wholesome relationships; to develop gospel values and effective pastoral systems; and to provide positive and accurate learning about sex and relationships. For teachers not directly involved in the overt teaching of relationship education there will be opportunities for learning, occurring in all areas of the curriculum which will indirectly refer to this area and **all teachers therefore need to be aware of the school's policy and curriculum for relationship education.**

Teachers should advise governors on the content and the organisation of sex and relationship education. They should help develop suitable procedures for dealing with requests from parents to withdraw their children from sex education lessons; contribute to reviewing existing provision and use their professional skills in developing the curriculum.

They should teach relationship and sex education curriculum as detailed in the schemes of work and make sure their own understanding of the teaching of the Church is clearly developed. Teachers need to participate in monitoring and evaluating relationship education.

Pupils:

All pupils have the right to be respected as a unique and unrepeatable human being created in the image of God. They have the right to receive accurate information, appropriate to their age and ability, to be able to develop spiritually and morally and to have an informed conscience and be able to make informed choices. It is hoped that all pupils will be willing to listen to the teachings of the Church and become aware of the variety of other views regarding moral issues related to relationships. Pupils need to be helped to develop a positive attitude and sense of responsibility regarding their own and others' sexuality; to have a sense of self esteem that enables them to enjoy relationships based on mutual respect, dignity and responsibility.

5. Safeguarding

Teachers have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of their pupils. They are in a particular position of trust. Sexual relationships involving children under 16 are a criminal offence. Teachers need to be aware that effective sex and relationship education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. There may be rare occasions when a teacher is directly approached by a child (under 16) who is sexually active or contemplating sexual activity. This will always raise child protection issues and sensitive handling will be needed to ensure that a proper balance is struck between the need to observe the law and the need for sensitive counselling and treatment including protection from disclosure to inappropriate adults. If a member of school staff (teaching or non-teaching) suspects that a child is a victim of abuse or they have reason to believe that he/she is at risk of abuse, they should be aware of the procedures for reporting their concerns and to whom they should do so. All staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report their concerns or suspicions;

All schools and colleges should have Safeguarding/Child Protection policies, which should include procedures to be followed if Safeguarding/Child Protection issues arise and all schools and colleges should have a senior member of staff with designated responsibility for child protection, who should receive appropriate regular training. Pupils should be clear from the outset that staff cannot always guarantee confidentiality.

It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that schools should be in the position of having to handle information without parental knowledge.

Overall Aims of Relationship and Sex Education in schools

- To engender growth in self respect and self worth, recognising that each of us is created in the image of God to give and receive love.
- To explore the meaning and value of relationships and the diversity of expression.
- To enable pupils to understand that love is the basis of meaningful relationships.
- To enable pupils to have an understanding of themselves, their own bodies, their emotional development as they grow, mature and change.
- To encourage pupils to be aware of their attitudes and values and have a sense of responsibility for themselves.
- To provide an understanding of the Church's teaching on the sacraments and how this underpins its view of relationships.
- To have an understanding of and to give consideration to the beliefs, values, culture and circumstances of others and how that impacts on family life.
- To explain the process of human procreation and sexuality.
- To enable pupils to recognise the importance of the choices they make and that they are responsible for the decisions they take.
- To understand the Church's teaching on issues concerning human sexuality.
- To help pupils recognise and resist peer, social and media pressures in relation to self image and sexuality.

Summary of overall outcomes for Primary Relationship and Sex Education

KEY STAGE 1

By the end of key stage one pupils should be able:

- To recognise and understand the importance of valuing themselves and others and that they are a child of God.
- To recognise and appreciate the term 'family' and the differing formats it can take.
- To recognise their membership in a family and the roles of individuals in the differing structure of families.
- To understand human growth and development and know themselves as male and female.
- To be able to name the main external parts of the body.
- To recognise and understand the term relationship and the range of relationships i.e. friends, family, husband /wife/ brother/sister.
- To recognise and understand the positive characteristics of a positive relationship i.e. sharing, working together, trust.
- To know about rituals that mark life and death, birth, marriage, death;
- To recognise that life is a gift from God and is precious.
- To recognise and begin to understand the range of emotions and how to deal with them in a positive and effective manner.
- To recognise and understand how to keep oneself safe.
- To recognise the need for personal health and safety and personal hygiene.
- To recognise and understand the dangers associated with use of the internet and other technology.

KEY STAGE 2

By the end of key stage two pupils should be able:

- To value themselves as a child of God, and their body as God's gift to them.
- To identify and explain how they grow and change throughout life;
- To understand and explain what is meant by the term relationship and the differing kinds of relationships i.e. within families, with friends and communities;
- To develop an appreciation and understanding of what is involved in bringing up children and what responsibilities parents have;
- To explain the rituals celebrated in Church, marking birth, marriage and death;
- To be able to identify and explain of their changing emotions and the need to respect other people's emotions and feelings;
- To begin to know and understand about the changes that come about through puberty;
- To know and understand their own bodies and their need for personal hygiene;
- To explain the names for the main parts of the body;
- To know the basic biology of human reproduction;
- To appreciate and explain that life is precious and a gift from God;
- To understand and explain the importance for forgiveness in relationships;
- To understand the responsibility they have for the choices and decisions they make.