



**St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School**

Headteacher: Miss V Maher

**Relationships and Sex  
Education Policy  
November 2023**

<b>Date of Policy</b>	<b>Signed</b>	<b>Position</b>
November 2022		Headteacher
<b>Monitoring</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Date</b>
Reviewed		
To be ratified		
<b>Uploaded to website</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Date</b>
This policy will be reviewed <b>annually</b> by the full Governing Body		
Date of next review : November 2024		

## **Introduction**

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.” 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. In primary schools the focus should 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.” This would include the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe.

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.

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 relationship 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**

The school’s RSE programme teaches Relationships Education and Health Education within the context of a Christian understanding of human sexuality rooted in the wisdom and teaching of the Catholic Church. It 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 the 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.

### **Our Mission Statement and Values**

We share the love of God every day, in everything we learn, do and say.

At St Philomena's we:

- work together with children, families and parish to promote Catholic values,
- inspire and challenge our children to fulfil their potential through enriched learning opportunities,
- foster self-esteem and pride by celebrating the achievements of our children,
- instil a lifelong love of learning,
- empower children to participate fully in society and embrace their personal responsibility to care for our world.

### **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" which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

### **Objectives**

RSE will help to develop attitudes, personal and social skills and knowledge and understanding. The school's RSE programme will:

- acknowledge, respect and value the teaching of the Catholic Church on all moral topics and subjects,
- provide information which is relevant and appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils,
- include the on-going development of communication and social skills,
- encourage the exploration and clarification of values and the development of positive attitudes,
- teach about and modelling healthy relationships,

- challenge discrimination in all its forms,
- promote the emotional health and mental and physical well-being of all pupils online as well as offline,
- foster respect for self and others and therefore contributing to community cohesion
- encourage children to take responsibility for their personal safety,
- normalise the physical and emotional changes which occur at puberty,
- encourage children to seek support if they are feeling unhappy.

### **Inclusion**

At St Philomena's, we identify that young people mature in different ways. Our teaching about relationships and sexuality is respectful of each child's starting point, their faith, culture and sexual orientation. 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. Lessons are framed by this understanding and young people are encouraged to respect difference and develop an approach of dialogue.

In cases where additional support is required or requested, further advice will be sought as necessary (e.g. from the school nurse or from our Parish Priest.)

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.

### **Equality**

The governing body has wide obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to ensure that St Philomena's Primary School endeavours to do its best for all of the pupils, irrespective of ability (physical and mental), educational needs, race, ethnicity, nationality, maternity, pregnancy, sex, gender identity or orientation or whether they are looked-after children.

### **Programme of Study**

The 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.

The programme of study is taught with a spiral approach to learning, in which pupils will revisit the same topics at an age-appropriate stage through their school life. The programme includes teaching about personal health, physical and emotional wellbeing, strong emotions, private parts of the body, personal relationships, family structures, trusted adults, growing bodies, puberty, periods, life cycles, the dangers of social media, where babies come from, an understanding of the Common Good and living in the wider

world. The entire teaching is underpinned with a religious understanding that our deepest identity is as a child of God - created chosen and loved by God. The programme is fully inclusive of all pupils and their families.

At St Philomena's, it is envisaged that this programme will be taught in discreet lessons, in cross curricular lessons, particularly R.E. and science and fundamentally embedded in the ethos of the school through assemblies, classroom discussions and the centring of all relationships in school on the person of Jesus Christ. It will be taught as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and allow children to express alternative beliefs and viewpoints where they hold such views and that clear ground rules for discussions will be established.

RSE is taught using a cross-curricular approach and using a wide range of teaching strategies.

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules
- distancing techniques
- discussion
- reflection
- experiential
- active
- brainstorming
- film & video
- group work
- role-play
- trigger drawings
- values clarification

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.

Parents are informed about our approaches to RSE and are also involved. PSHE SEAL materials are used across both key stages. Lessons always take account of the safeguarding policy. The school also provides opportunities to view the materials before being used. Children's well-being will be monitored through providing nurture sessions where needed, through a positive behaviour policy and by encouraging children to be responsible for the choices they make.

### **Parents and Carers**

The Church recognises parents and carers as the first educators of their children. The school should support parents in this task. At St Philomena's, we seek to work with parents and support them as their children grow and begin to develop their own character as well as experiencing changes in their physical appearance. 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 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 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 headteacher will discuss the application with parents to ensure that their wishes are understood and to ensure that they understand the nature and purpose of the curriculum in a Catholic context. The headteacher/ RSE co-ordinator will document this process and a record will be kept in the office.

In the situation where children are withdrawn from RSE lessons, the school has a responsibility to find alternative provision for those children. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning.

### **Responsibility for teaching the programme**

The Headteacher and RE Subject leader are responsible for leadership, co-ordination and monitoring of the programme. Teachers are expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school and appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSE. They will deliver the RSE programme of study, supported in some areas by teaching assistants and the school nurse. However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE programme. Staff are called to be role models of the school's ethos in their relationships with other staff members, their conduct towards parents and their care for the children in the school. They will also be contributing to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.

Teaching and learning about human relationships will be part of the life of the school. However, the programme of study will be taught through cross curricular dimensions where appropriate, such as R.E., science, PSHE and computing.

Sometimes, the children's learning will be best supported by using other agencies, such as the school nurse, or other visitors to school. Such visitors will be guided to the protocol for visitors at St Philomena's and agree to follow its instruction. They will ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice.

### **Dealing with difficult 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.

The Department for Education (2000) offers the following guidelines for dealing with questions.

- Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting. Many teachers are concerned about responding to unexpected questions or comments from pupils in a whole-class situation. Having a set of ground rules

should reduce the chances of this happening, but teachers will need support and training so that they prepare for the unexpected. For example:

- If a question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupil of the ground rules. If the pupil needs further support, the teacher can refer her or him to the appropriate person, such as a school counsellor, school nurse, helpline, or an outside agency or service;
- If a teacher doesn't know the answer to a question, it is essential to acknowledge this, and to suggest that the pupil or teacher or both together research the subject later;
- If a problem is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. In this way, the pupil will feel they have received respectful treatment, but the rest of the class will not have to listen to personal experience or inappropriate information. To maintain trust and respect the teacher must remember to talk with the pupil later; and
- If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the school's child protection procedures.

#### Controversial or Sensitive issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE. 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. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion.

#### Supporting children and young people deemed to be 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 safeguarding lead.

#### **Confidentiality and Advice**

Sensitive subjects in RSE always need to be framed so that the young people who are participating know that there is pastoral support if any of the issues discussed make them feel the need to talk further or share confidential information. This should always be done within the safeguarding framework of the school and it is paramount that all staff teaching RSE have up to date safeguarding professional development. At St Philomena's, this training is completed annually, for all governors and staff. 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.

Questions asked by students that are a cause for concern for the teacher, for example because of their explicit or graphic content, should be addressed in accordance with the school's safeguarding policy and confidentiality procedures.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

To ensure that this policy is adhered to and is effective, it is monitored, reviewed and evaluated regularly. This policy will be reviewed by governors, and changes made where necessary, in terms of changes to the legal framework or changes to the curriculum. The whole school community will be regularly consulted and given the opportunity to review and assess the policy; this includes pupils, parents, staff and other staff members. Pupil's learning is monitored and assessed through teacher assessments and tracking grids.