



Relationships and Sex Education Policy (RSE)



Reviewed: June 2019

Signed **Date**

Next Review: July 2020

Rationale

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in a school context is a positive opportunity to help young people mature into adulthood and this is particularly relevant for young people in St John's. In a world that may exert different pressures and values, RSE will help them to make informed decisions. Pupils, as in all school contexts, will receive factual knowledge e.g. about bodily changes and puberty. This will be contingent on their level of understanding, but throughout, there is a continual emphasis on values and on personal responsibility to self and others.

Thus our teaching in this area is aimed at encouraging students to have due regard for moral considerations within the context of Catholic ideals, whilst encouraging respect for those in other situations.

To us, parents and carers are the foremost educators of their children, and thus we see RSE education as informed by partnership. Parents and carers are offered practical support and guidance, both individually and through formal parents training programmes in order to help them tackle some of these difficult issues and challenges.

We are acutely aware of the vulnerabilities of many of our students, and look to incorporate advice and guidance from a range of specialised external professionals (e.g. CAMHS), who work particularly with young people with learning needs who may be at risk of developing sexually harmful behaviour. We have close and effective relationships with social care agencies and health care staff and are committed to ensuring that St John's has an open culture in which we share concerns and worries about our young people freely.

Aims and Objectives

- To develop feelings of self confidence, self worth and self respect, alongside those of value and respect for others.
- To promote responsible behaviour and to equip our pupils and their families with the means to keep safe in the face of ever greater risks, including in relation to online safety.
- To work in informed and trusting partnership with families and carers and other agencies
- To provide information on sensitive issues including contraception, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, with due consideration for pupils' levels of understanding and for Catholic teaching and values.
- To create a safe and positive environment in which young people feel they can raise concerns and worries.

Teaching RSE

Relationships and Sex education is to be taught throughout the school at the appropriate level of maturity. We intend that all students shall experience a programme of sex education and personal development at a level which is commensurate with their age and physical development, with a clear focus on positive and healthy relationships. Pupils' understanding should be supported by total communication approaches including practical and multisensory cues.

The programme will be taught by class teachers, with additional input on a small group or 1:1 basis from the Learning Mentor team, when appropriate.

Throughout the programme it is acknowledged that many issues contravening Catholic teaching will be encountered. These issues will be addressed within a framework which acknowledges that whereas these issues do not occasion fundamental changes in Catholic moral teaching, they do require our response in asserting the Gospel values of fidelity and chastity as well as forgiveness, compassion and concern for others. A Catholic approach will be used to deal with issues of controversy that students may be encountering.

Whilst our Catholic approach to others must always be non-judgemental of them as individuals and whilst seeking always to be compassionate towards

and understanding of individuals, all our students have the right of access to knowledge of the consequences of their choices and actions. Suitable opportunities and contexts should be sensitively sought to spell out these consequences at appropriate levels of understanding and maturity.

Always the aim should be to enable our pupils to cope with their own sexual development albeit with appropriate support and to encourage growth where there is potential for growth, towards the ideal of fully functioning persons; remembering that we are all on our journey in Faith, in the process of being made whole in Christ.

The organisation of RSE

It is a legal requirement that students of secondary age, in whatever type of school, receive a programme of RSE. The governors expect a basic programme of sex education and personal development to be part of every student's entitlement from the ages of 5-19, planned according to individual and group needs and development.

There will be times when gender groups will need to work alone and other times when students will be grouped according to their development and maturity. No teacher will be expected to undertake specific sex education teaching without the support of colleagues in the school and through attendance at training courses as necessary. We recognise that this subject needs to be taught sensitively and with confidence.

We expect support staff, who have much experience of the students, to be involved in planning, taking part in and evaluation of classroom work, although the overall responsibility rests with the teachers delivering the programme.

The programme may be delivered as a discrete unit e.g. as part of the mentors' Keeping Safe Programme, or integrated as appropriate into Personal, Social, Citizenship and Health Education (PSHCE) teaching, including through awards and accredited programmes.

RESOURCES

The most valuable resources in the education of our students are to be found in the understanding, experience, skills and creativity of our staff.

Programmes that will be used in the delivery of sex education are as follows:

RE: **Journey in love H – volumes 1&2**

(Sr Jude Groden Publ:Mccrimmons)

Science : **Equals Curriculum, OCR Units**

PSHE/C: Fiona Speirs – **A PSHE programme for Learners with ASD.**

Teaching staff also incorporate advice and guidance from internal and external therapists, including the Speech and Language Therapy Department and RESPOND.

Parents' rights to withdraw their children from sex education

By working with parents and carers in these ways our experience has shown that we have convinced them of the value of sex education for their children. We are optimistic that this will continue.

Parents now have the right to withdraw their children from sex education, although not from these elements which form part of their learning about reproduction as part of the circle of life within science lessons.

Monitoring the sex education policy and programme

The school will need to assess how effective are the aims, content and methods in promoting students' learning. Feedback from staff, parents, carers and students will help to judge this.

This policy for RSE should be read alongside the RE policy, and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.