

Relationships and Sex Education Policy – St Thomas More RC College

1. School Mission Statement

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions with regard to relationships and sex education. (RSE) We set out our rationale for and approach to relationships and sex education at St Thomas More RC College.

The DFE guidance defines RSE as “lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of 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” (Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DFE, 2000). It is about the development of the pupil’s knowledge and understanding of her/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. The DFE identifies three main elements: “attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding”.

2. 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 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 (‘Education in Sexuality’, Catholic Education Service), and as advocated by the DfE, relationships and sex education will be firmly embedded in the CPSHE 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 and support will be provided to help pupils deal with different sets of values.

3. 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 relationship and sex education is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, at St Thomas More RC College, 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 to “positive and prudent relationship and sex education” (‘Declaration on Christian Education’, Vatican II, 1965). It is characterised by a whole person, whole school, and developmental approach (Education in Sexuality, Catholic Education Service) thus setting it firmly within our distinctively Christian vision of education.

4. Objectives

We aim to ensure that each pupil will:

- know that they are a unique creation of God and so are able to grow in self-respect developing a positive attitude to themselves, their feelings and their sexuality
- understand that self-giving love is central to relationships
- recognise the importance of forgiveness and saying sorry in relationships
- understand the reasons for self-respect, and why they should act with respect and responsibility in their relationships
- reflect on their own relationships recognising those qualities that help relationships grow
- to understand the significance of building healthy relationships, acceptable behaviour, treating people with respect and the right to be treated equally.
- understand what the law allows and does not allow and to link this to the Equality Act 2010
- develop knowledge, communication skills and understanding in order to help personal decision-making
- act responsibly as an individual and as a member of a group
- identify and have the confidence to talk about their emotions and how to respond positively to them
- communicate a point of view clearly and appropriately and listen to the views of others
- take responsibility for oneself and for one’s actions
- come to understand the influence and impact of the media, Internet, peer groups and develop the ability to assess pressures and respond appropriately
- explore and respond appropriately to prejudice and gender stereotyping
- think positively about their own body
- understand, in ways appropriate to their age and developmental needs, the changes they will undergo including puberty (delivered in the Science curriculum)
- know the correct vocabulary for external body parts, sexual organs, and menstruation (delivered in the Science curriculum)
- think positively about other people, adults as well as children
- to celebrate diversity and equality and to challenge stereotypical thinking (including homophobia, racism, sexism and gender stereotypes)
- take care of themselves, their health, safety and personal hygiene
- know that some diseases are infectious
- keep themselves safe and ask for help and support when needed
- become aware of good choices and wrong choices and their consequences
- understand that some choices can have implications, such as psychological distress, physical trauma, STIs, HIV/AIDS, abortion
- make good choices about what to do in particular situations
- manage relationships with friends confidently and effectively
- develop the ability to form positive, non-exploitative relationships and reject bullying

- explore and reflect on their own experience of people who are married
- have an understanding of the family, an appreciation of the values of family life and the roles and responsibilities of family members
- have an understanding of a family as a spiritual community in which members can grow in faith, hope and love
- understand that the difference between male and female is part of God's loving and creative plan
- understand sexual behaviour and reproduction in the context of a loving and self-giving marriage avoiding its reduction to bodily functions (delivered in the Science curriculum)
- understand the Church's teaching on sexual activity outside of marriage (delivered in the Religious Education curriculum)

5. Aims

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at St Thomas More are to:

- Deliver RSE in CPSHE (Citizenship, Personal, Social, Health and Economics education) lessons against a mapped document in line with the national framework
- Prepare pupils for post-16 life in taught lessons once per fortnight (1 hour)
- Create a positive culture around issues of relationships, where pupils feel valued and are able to engage in positive dialogue with their peers and subject teacher
- Assist pupils in developing feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Teach pupils the correct dialogue to be informed to express their feelings

6. Statutory requirements

We provide RSE to all pupils as per the Children and Social Work Act 2017. In teaching RSE, we must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

7. Policy Development

This policy is a working document and has been, and will continue to be, developed with staff, pupils and their parents/carers. The continuing consultation and policy development process has involved or will continue to involve the following steps:

- Review – all relevant information has been collated, including relevant national and local guidance, together with our needs as identified in our local community as they present
- Staff consultations – Microsoft Forms surveys will be issued to staff to collate thoughts and feelings about what is delivered in CPSHE (RSE).
- Pupil consultation – To continue to use digital platforms to collate pupils' thoughts on the delivery and content of CPSHE.
- Parent/Carer consultation – An overview of what is taught in CPSHE will be shared on our college's website. Thoughts from parents/carers will be considered in tailoring the curriculum map and delivery.

- Ratification – any time a significant change is considered, this will be presented to the Board of Governors for review and ratification.

8. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, health, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity. RSE is delivered through the CPSHE curriculum in lessons.

9. Curriculum

The CPSHE curriculum at both Key Stage Three and Four has been developed against the national framework whilst also considering the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If a pupil asks a question or discloses a potential safeguarding concern, the class teacher will share this with the safeguarding team inline with whole school policy.

10. Delivery of RSE

RSE is taught within CPSHE timetabled lessons at Key Stages Three and Four, alongside Citizenship, PSHE, and Careers.

Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in Religious Education lessons. Pupils in Year 9 also receive a stand-alone sex education session delivered by Tameside MBC.

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

11. Roles and Responsibilities

11.1 The Governing Board

The Governing Board will review and amend/approve the Relationships and Sex Education Policy, and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation. Furthermore, the Governing Board will

ensure the expected educational outcomes are in place for all pupils and the teaching addresses the needs of all pupils, especially SEND pupils.

11.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE

11.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress within lessons
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils, especially SEND pupils
- Responding appropriate to pupils whose parents/carers wish to have their child withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE in CPSHE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher.

11.4 Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully with the RSE elements delivered in CPSHE lessons and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect, sensitivity and dignity.

12. Parents'/Carers' Right to Withdraw

Parents/Carers have the right to withdraw their child/children from the non-statutory components of RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive RSE rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will discuss the request with parents/carers and take appropriate action. Alternative work will need to be provided by the parents/carers for the pupils who are withdrawn from the non-statutory elements of RSE.

13. Training

Staff will be trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it will be included in our continuing professional development calendar. The Headteacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

14. Monitoring Arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Mr Wright, curriculum leader for CPSHE and Careers with Mr Brophy, Headteacher, through a variety of activities such as meetings with the team delivering RSE to discuss plans and pupil feedback. Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems. This policy will be reviewed by Mr Brophy, Headteacher, every two years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governing Board.