



St Thomas More RC College

Policy:

Relationship and Sex Education Policy

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months

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	Signature of member of Governing body	Date
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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 – Parents/Carers have been consulted and an overview of what is taught in CPSHE continues to be shared on our college's website. Parents/Carers can share their views at any time by contacting school and parents/carers views are taken into account when 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 in line 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.

15. Content

The school follows the statutory government guidance for the delivery of Sex and Relationship Education published in 2019 for implementation from September 2020. The school ensures that pupils are taught the following by the end of Secondary School.

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.

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 (in secondary schools/academies relating to forced-marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion, the age of consent and legislation relating to equality). 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.

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 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.

The content is delivered thorough a number of subject areas including CPSHE, RE, Science and is also supported through delivery by external speakers and the use of form time and assembly.

Families

Pupils should know:

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- what marriage is, including their legal status – for example, that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.
- why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.
- the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
- how to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships), how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed

Respectful relationships, including friendships

Pupils should know:

- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships, in all contexts including online, such as:
 - trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict
 - reconciliation and ending relationships, this includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (for example, how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)
- that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help
- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable
- the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal

Online and media

Pupils should know:

- their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online
- not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them
- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- the impact of viewing harmful content

- that specifically sexually explicit material, for example pornography, presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online

Being safe

Pupils should know:

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships
- how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn, in all contexts, including online

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Pupils should know:

- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage
- that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help)
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing
- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour
- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

The Law

It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions.

Pupils should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- marriage
- consent, including the age of consent
- violence against women and girls

- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- pornography
- abortion
- sexuality
- gender identity
- substance misuse
- violence and exploitation by gangs
- extremism and radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- hate crime
- female genital mutilation (FGM)