

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Relationships and Sex Education Policy (draft)

March 2015

Introduction

"Growing in God's Love" is our motto and our Mission Statement commits us to provide "excellence in education" which is "inspired by the teaching of the Catholic Church" and helps the children to recognise Jesus as our "friend and model".

The Vision for the school which staff, governors, pupils and parents developed in 2014 states that children will leave St Patrick's "happy with who they are, confident in their abilities, polite and articulate, and ambitious for their future growth."

For the children in our care, relationships with God, with their families and with each other are central to their development.

The governors of St Patrick's recognise this. They also recognise that preparing the children for the relationships which they may have as adults and for the emotional, physical and spiritual transformations that are a part of growing up is an essential part of the role of the school.

FRAMEWORK

The preparation of this policy statement has involved careful consideration by teachers and governors of advisory statements by authorities within the Catholic Church, our local authority and the Department of Education.

Fundamentally it is borne of our perception of the needs of the children in our care and a firm belief that – “Children and young people need to be provided with positive and prudent sex education” – ref: Bishops of the Second Vatican Council.

At St. Patrick's this education is firmly placed within the context of all meaningful relationships which children experience as they grow.

Those relationships are supported by an emphasis on the traditional Christian virtues of charity, faith, hope, justice, temperance, prudence and courage. Our promotion of these virtues is designed to strengthen the child's current relationships and enable them to cultivate behaviours which enable them to have successful relationships as adults.

PRINCIPLES

The 1988 Education Reform Act states that schools should provide a curriculum which promotes 'the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils... and of society and prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life'.

Whilst fully acknowledging and complying with the legal requirements we stress the Christian influence on our teaching of all areas of the curriculum and that this teaching is placed firmly within the tradition of the Catholic faith. Sex education is an integral part of the growth and development of pupils and cannot be neglected if the school is to fulfil its statutory obligation.

We view the partnership of home, school and parish as vital in providing the context for the life-long process of religious formation. Positive and prudent sex education begins within the family and we cannot overstate the importance of parental involvement. 'The first and primary educators of children are their parents' (Religious Dimension of education in Catholic School, p.24)

As a Catholic school we co-operate and contribute by bringing a distinctive contribution to this parental privilege and responsibility. We value the advice offered by D.F.E. Circular 5/94 on Sex Education in Schools (7) which asks schools to :- 'recognise that parents are key figures in helping their children to cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up and in preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities that sexual maturity brings.'

We believe that education in sexuality is a lifelong process which recognises that human sexuality is a gift from God. Therefore we strive for the very highest of Christian ideals in our teaching and learning which underpin and are reiterated in our Mission Statement.

AIMS

We believe that the inclusion of positive, person-centred education is at the heart of Catholic Christian Education. Our aims, therefore, need to support the moral, spiritual, social, emotional and cultural development of all pupils, ensuring that they have the ability to accept their own and others' sexuality in positive ways and to enjoy relationships based on mutual respect, dignity and responsibility. We aim to keep pupils safe from harm and protect them from exploitation.

We view SRE to be fundamentally concerned with the development, growth and journey of the whole towards becoming 'fully human, fully alive' as a unique creation made in God's image. We therefore provide lessons which promote an accurate knowledge and understanding of sexuality and relationships in accordance to the age and ability of our pupils.

Key aims are:

- To engender growth in self respect and self worth, recognising that each of us is created in the image of God
- To explore the meaning and value of life, and give some appreciation of the values of family life
- To enable pupils to have an understanding that love is central to, and the basis of meaningful relationships
- To enable pupils to have an understanding of themselves, their own bodies and their emotional development as they grow and change
- To encourage pupils to be aware of the attitudes and values and have a sense of responsibility for themselves
- To enable pupils to reflect on their relationships and recognise the qualities that help relationships to grow and develop positively.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

We recognise that there are sensitive issues surrounding the teaching of SRE and aim to work closely with parents to ensure that they fully understand what we teach, in acknowledgement that some questions best be addressed within the context of the family environment. We invite parents to view the teaching materials used in Year 6 and to speak to the class teacher about the content of the SRE lessons.

Parents /Carers have the option to withdraw their child from SRE lessons if they so wish.

MANAGEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

SRE is part of the National Curriculum Science programme, but may also be taught during Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons. Lessons concerning relationships may also feature in Religion and English lessons. Questions will be answered honestly and confidentially will be respected.

CROSS CURRICULAR LINKS

We recognise that the content of a sex education curriculum outlined above requires enormous flexibility by the teachers. The emphasis we place on positive relationships will permeate all aspects of the curriculum and form the basis of attitudes within our school. However, there will also be times when direct teaching will be necessary e.g. when biological facts are being explained. This will normally occur within the framework of the National Curriculum and in line with our Science and PSHE scheme.

GROUPING

Girls and boys will normally be taught together so that they can receive and be seen to receive the same information. However girls and boys at the top end of the school will be taught separately occasionally so that subjects such as menstruation can be freely discussed.

MONITORING / ASSESSMENT

Teachers will be encouraged to critically reflect on their work in delivering the sex education programme and to engage children in consideration of the relationships in which they are involved. Factual information / assimilation will be assessed and recorded as part of the Science National Curriculum.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Because of the unique nature of this subject, special needs will be considered in terms of the child's relationship with others, him/herself or with God. These relationships may be affected by circumstances such as bereavement, family difficulties, family breakdown, damaged friendships, arguments etc. Special needs may be quantified as long or very short-term but nonetheless acknowledged.

It may also be necessary to acknowledge and deal with the special needs of children with some indirect or even direct experience of abusive sexual relationships. Such a situation would always be dealt with in accordance with the Camden Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and in consultation with Social Care.

RESOURCES

C.E.S. Document "Education in Sexuality" 1994
BBC Videos (Robert Winston)
Camden PSHE Scheme

Date of last review – March 2015

Date of next review – June 2016