



Relationships and Sex Education Policy

**Reviewed and Approved by Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare
Committee**

On: 28 June 2018

Reviewed and Ratified by the Full Governing Body

On: 10 July 2018

Next review date: Spring 2020

Member of SLT responsible: Mr D Hurley

Definition

The Department for Education (DFE) defines Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) as “lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage, 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. Head teachers, Teachers & School Governors Status: good practice. Date of issue: July 2000 Ref: DfEE 0116/2000 Page 5, point 9). It is about the development of the student’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 good conscience. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity. The DFE identifies three key elements: “attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding”.

Statutory Curriculum Requirements

Under section 3.6 of the National Curriculum, RSE is compulsory from year 7 onwards. Secondary schools must have regard to the guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

We are also legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science.

Context

At St Edward’s we wish to express a very positive attitude towards relationships and human sexuality. We affirm the intrinsic value of every person made in the image of God and that each one of us is placed in community for relationship with others. We further affirm that our sexuality is a gift of God to be celebrated and rightly expressed, treating ourselves and others with dignity and respect. These affirmations and this RSE Policy are set in this context, and flow out of the Christian Faith and its ethos and values that we share as Roman Catholics, Anglicans and as members of other Christian traditions. At the same time we are aware that we live within the context of a complex and fast-changing society where convictions and practices have changed enormously. We acknowledge that our Policy is set in the context of each young person’s home/personal circumstances and needs to be applied with sensitivity and respect. We work within the context of United Kingdom Education Acts and other legislation and in particular the Department for Education’s Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (2000).

Roman Catholic and Church of England Views

Within the context of our joint church school we take into account perspectives of both churches.

The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales has stated “The Church has always recognised that it is the privilege and responsibility of the family to inform and educate their children in all matters pertaining to human growth and development, particularly in the sensitive area of sexual development”. It calls for schools to assist by collaborating with the family and “to consider their role in such education and to review their programmes so that our children and young people are given positive guidance and a true appreciation of all their human gifts” (Laying the Foundations for Education in Personal Relationships, Bishops’ Conference of England & Wales, Low Week Statement, 1987).

The Church of England states that relationships and sex education “should be set in a context which is consistent with the school’s Christian ethos and values. It is taught within a framework of Christian values and the Christian understanding that sex is a gift of God and part of creation.” (Salisbury Diocesan Guidelines 2010).

Aims

At St Edward’s we are committed to the education of the whole child and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. The aims of RSE at our school are to:

- Provide our students with an understanding of the nature and importance of the unique and whole person “created male and female in the image of God”, respecting life as a gift from God.
- Teach RSE with the belief in the absolute worth of human beings and the unconditional, infinite love of God.
- Support the life-long spiritual, personal, moral, and social development of all our students.
- Ensure that our students have the ability to accept their own and others’ sexuality in positive ways without fear of being stigmatised.
- Encourage relationships based on mutual respect, dignity and responsibility free from any abuse, as children of God, enlightened by our Christian faith.
- Provide a safe framework in which sensitive discussions can take place.

Overall Objectives

Within the context of our shared Christian Faith to enable the students to:

- Understand the physical and emotional development that occurs during adolescence and beyond;
- Value and build loving relationships;
- Understand the importance of mutual responsibility, trust and respect within these relationships
- See Christian marriage as the loving, life-long union between a woman and a man, within which sex is an integral expression of this deep love;
- Value family life and the responsibilities of parenthood;
- Learn the significance of marriage and families as key building blocks of community and society;
- Increase awareness of the need for dignity and respect of oneself and of others;
- Ensure awareness of other views regarding marriage and family life;
- Be taught to have respect for their own and other people’s bodies; and to respect the choice of abstinence;
- Know the meaning of the virtue of chastity and to understand that it is to be respected and valued;
- Understand the values underlying sexual behaviour, enabling students to make informed and responsible decisions;
- Be aware of the dangers of sex being used compulsively, competitively and destructively;
- Develop an awareness and understanding of spiritual, physical and emotional issues relating to sexual activity;
- Be made aware of the way in which peer pressure, advertising and all media influence their views about relationships, sex and the choice of abstinence;
- Know and understand how British law applies to sexual relationships including consent.
- Recognise, respect and value their own sexual identity and that of others.

Curriculum Entitlement

RSE will be delivered through RE, Science and PSHE lessons, collective worship in assemblies and in tutor time. Pupils may also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by trained health care professionals.

Across all key stages and in all areas pupils will be supported with developing the following skills:

- Communication, including how to manage changing relationships and emotions,
- Recognising and assessing potential risks,
- Seeking help and support when required,
- Informed decision making,
- Self-respect and empathy for others,
- Discussion and group work.

These skills are taught within the context of family life.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents and carers are the primary educators of their children. Our role is to work alongside parents/carers in providing this education in relationships and sex within a Christian context. We will inform parents and carers about the RSE programme and be prepared to answer any questions they might have about it.

Parents and carers currently have the right to withdraw their daughter/son from all or part of the RSE programme, other than that required by the National Curriculum. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the headteacher. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. The headteacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action. Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from RSE.

The Governing Board

The governing board will approve the RSE policy, and receive an update regarding its implementation at least annually.

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from components of RSE.

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students

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

Students

Students are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

Confidentiality and safeguarding children procedures

Students need to feel safe and secure in the environment where RSE takes place. Effective RSE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships.

Teachers will conduct RSE lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a student makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved, in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as a matter of safeguarding under the age of 16. (This may be a matter for careful discernment if the disclosure reveals peer activity). Teachers will respond in a similar way if any student, including all sixth formers, indicates that he/she may have been the victim of abuse or grooming. If the teacher has concerns he/she will follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review of Policy

In line with Government statutory requirements the school must have an up to date policy published on the school website

The PDBW Committee of the governing body monitors the RSE policy. This committee reports its findings and recommendations to the full governing body, as necessary, if the policy needs modification or revision.

The PSHE co-ordinator will monitor the various dimensions of the programme. The programme will be evaluated through student and parent voice. The results of this evaluation will be shared with all interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

Policy Links

The RSE policy has clear links to other school policies aimed at promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including the:

- Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy for ICT including safe internet use
- PSHE Policy
- Collective Worship Policy
- SMSC Policy
- Confidentiality Policy

This document has been put together using and adapting material taken from the Salisbury Diocesan 'Love and Sex Matters' material and advice from the Catholic Education Service. It has also been created with the help and support of the School Advisers Sarah Adams from the Diocese of Plymouth and Verity Holloway from the Diocese of Salisbury.