

# ST BERNARD'S HIGH SCHOOL



## SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION POLICY

Drafted: December 2003

Updated: September 2009  
March 2012  
March 2013  
December 2015  
February 2016  
January 2019  
March 2022

**Approved by Full Governing Body:** September 2023

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Chair of Governors

**For Review: September 2024**

## **Mission Statement**

St Bernard's is a school community that aims to live by Jesus' commandment, "Love one another as I have loved you."

We are a Catholic learning community committed to the ongoing development of the entire potential of every person, achieved through a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.

We care for each other as individuals of equal worth, regardless of status, sex, race or religion and thus actively seek to promote safeguarding, justice and fairness.

We provide an atmosphere in which all can grow in our Faith, and encourage this faith by a lively relevant liturgy.

We work with parents, parishes, local communities and industry to prepare our students for the opportunities of adulthood.

***This policy has been drawn up in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church***

## **Introduction**

### Sex and Relationships Education

The Department for Education 'Sex and Relationships Guidance' (July 2000) notes:

- It is a learning about physical, moral and emotional development
- It is about the importance of family life, of marriage, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care
- It is about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health
- It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity
- SRE has three main elements – attitudes and values, personal and social skills, knowledge and understanding

Education is about the growth and development of the whole person. It should aim to integrate a student's intellectual, spiritual, moral, emotional, psychological development. Thus assisting progress towards Christian Maturity. This is in line with St. Bernard's Mission Statement.

St. Bernard's aims to ensure that the students develop a sound understanding of the teachings of the Church and the values of the Gospel. Sex and Relationships Education in a Catholic School aims to present to the young a vision and ideal of sexuality that is fully human.

Sex and Relationship Education delivered through the Personal Social and Health Education programme and is complemented by the RE Curriculum at KS4, but as SRE should be centred on the whole person it is also part of a whole school approach. It is seen to be a responsibility shared by the whole staff with the whole curriculum contributing to the acquisition of the right knowledge, right understanding and the formulation of right attitudes. In this sense, it is part of the ethos of the school in which the quality of relationships between staff and students, between the students themselves, is marked by honesty, personal identification, warmth, trust and security.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Aims**

These relate closely to those of Personal, Social and Health Education and also RE and to the School's Mission Statement:-

- to offer knowledge required in order for students to make informed decisions
- to offer the opportunity for students to explore their values and attitudes which will affect how knowledge is used
- to help students to develop the skills which are needed to turn decisions into actions
- to specifically support the personal, moral and social development of all students, 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, free from abuse. This approach and commitment are founded on the Christian Catholic ethos of the school and adhere to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, whereby the teaching of a subject does not subject students to discrimination.

### **Objectives**

- To have an awareness of where students are, in their own knowledge and understanding, so that their concerns can be identified
- 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 a family life
- To enable students to have an understanding that love is central and the basis of meaningful relationships.
- To enable students to have some understanding of themselves, their own bodies, their emotional development, as they grow and change and have awareness of fertility, the constant fertility of the male and the cyclical fertility of the female, and the changes in feelings the monthly cycle brings.
- To encourage students to be aware of their attitudes and values and have a sense of responsibility for themselves.
- To enable students to reflect on their relationships and recognise the qualities that help relationships to grow and develop positively
- To have an understanding of and to give sensitive consideration to the beliefs, values and cultures of others
- To provide a forum where students can share their concerns and offer a climate of support where they know they will be listened to sensitively.
- To correct misinformation
- To explain the process of human procreation
- To enable students to recognise the importance of the choices they make and that they are responsible for the decisions they take
- To help with careful consideration of contraception and family planning
- To help students resist peer, social and media pressures where necessary
- To help students develop their critical faculties and be aware of the values conveyed by the media in relation to self-image and sexuality
- To help with the careful consideration of and teaching on homosexuality.
- To be clear on legal issues pertaining to sexual conduct and sexual practices including female genital mutilation (FGM).

## **1. Balanced Curriculum**

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that students are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. Students will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE (in 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 students have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.

## **2. Legal Requirements**

Section 351 of The Education Act 1996 requires the promotion of the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all students at the school and of society and to prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. All Secondary Schools have a statutory duty to ensure that a programme of SRE (including information about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases) is being delivered to all registered students.

St. Bernard's will ensure that it meets the legal requirements especially with regard to informing parents of the SRE programme in case they wish to exercise their right to withdraw their daughter from the sex education part of the programme. Parents will be informed of SRE content at the beginning of each academic year. Information will be placed on the school website. Reference to the policy is also included in the school prospectus.

### **3. Resources**

- Use of resources from Diocese
- Preparation and briefing of teachers delivering the programme
- Evaluations from teachers and students to modify the programme

Apart from the legal requirements from Central Government, the Catholic Church also requires priority to be given to the development of a catechesis of life and marriage so that our young people will be able to form mature attitudes towards sex and marriage. In order for this to happen they should, as they advance in years be given positive and prudent sexual education (Gravissimum Educationis 1965).

It can be seen that the three elements within our co-ordinated sex education programme are:-

1. Biology - The factual knowledge of:
  - human reproduction and sexual development
  - sexual health, hygiene and sexually transmitted diseases
  - pregnancy, birth and parenthood
  - birth control and abortion
  - FGM
2. Sexuality -
  - an appreciation of this intrinsic, God given aspect of human nature
  - an understanding of the role of sexuality within human relationships
  - an awareness of the social and economic pressures associated with sexuality.
3. Morality -
  - an understanding of the moral responsibilities placed on us as we attempt to live out our lives as followers of Christ.

Note: LFEPR - Laying the foundations for education in personal relationships  
Published by the Bishops Conference of England and Wales, 30 April 1987

EGHL - Educational guidance in human love  
Published by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, Rome  
1 November 1982

### **Equalities Obligations**

The Governing Body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all of the students, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, pregnancy, maternity, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children.

## **ORGANISATION OF SCHOOL SEX EDUCATION**

### **Co-ordination**

Sex Education is co-ordinated by the Head of PSHE in consultation with the Head of RE.

### **Delivery**

is through:

- *planned* aspects within the Religious Education, Science and, PSHE curricula;
- addressing moral and ethical issues which may arise from apparently unrelated topics in all National Curriculum subjects. Within this category, as long as any discussion takes place within the context of the subject it will not be deemed to be part of the sex education programme and therefore not subject to the parental right of withdrawal.
- External visitors: - Our School will often call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSE. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher led sessions. It is important that any external visitor is clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in school delivering a session. Any visitor must adhere to our code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools'.

Health professionals should follow the School's policies, minimising the potential for disclosures or inappropriate comments using negotiated ground rules and distancing techniques as other teachers would. They will ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice.

### **Inclusion and Differentiated Learning**

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual students in respect to students' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example their own sexual orientation, faith or culture and is taught in a way that does not subject students to discrimination. Lessons will also help children to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber-bullying), use of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help. (In looking at these questions, it is important to draw links to the School's inclusion policy).

### **CPD**

- Staff - With regard to Sex and Relationships Education it is important that staff feel comfortable with the subject matters. Support will be offered through an in-service training programme. All staff are asked to teach within the school's moral framework (see Appendix).

### **Time Available**

Sex and Relationships Education forms part of the curriculum in every year group.

### **Responsibilities**

#### **Governors**

- Draw up the RSE policy, in consultation with parents and teachers;
- Ensure that the policy is available to parents;
- Ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, eg SEN, the ethos of the School and our Christian beliefs;
- Ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children;
- Establish a Link Governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used;
- Ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHE.

### **Head Teacher**

- The Head Teacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, the Diocesan Schools' Service and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

### **PSHE/RSE Co-ordinator**

- The co-ordinator with the Head Teacher has a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to RSE and the provision of in-service training. (They may be supported by the curriculum deputy and the member of staff with responsibility for Child Protection).

### **All Staff**

- RSE is a whole school issue. All teachers have a responsibility of care; as well as fostering academic progress they should actively contribute to the guardianship and guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of their students. Teachers will be expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the School. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSE. All staff have been included in the development of this policy and all staff should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them.

### **Consultation**

This policy is based on the model policy of the Catholic Education Service. The policy is made available as a draft on the school website, and parents are invited to comment on it prior to approval by governors. The RE department is consulted, and the governing body's Ethos Committee scrutinises it prior to final approval.

### **Values and Virtues**

Our programme enshrines Catholic values relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life. It also promotes those virtues which are essential in responding to the God's call to love others with a proper respect for their dignity and the dignity of the human body. The following virtues will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

### **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 RSE is an integral part of this education. Further more, our school aims state that we will endeavour to raise students' 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:

In partnership with parents to provide children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education" which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

### **Objectives**

To develop the following attitudes and virtues:

- Reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility;
- Respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others;
- Joy in the goodness of the created world and their own bodily natures;
- Responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others;
- Recognising and valuing their own sexual identity and that of others;

- Celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love;
- Recognising the importance of marriage and family life;
- Fidelity in relationships.

To develop the following personal and social skills:

- Making sound judgements and good choices which have integrity and which are respectful of the individual's commitments;
- Loving and being loved, and the ability to form friendships and loving, stable relationships free from exploitation, abuse and bullying;
- Managing emotions within relationships and when relationships break down, with confidence, sensitivity and dignity;
- Managing conflict positively, recognising the value of difference;
- Cultivating humility, mercy and compassion, learning to forgive and be forgiven;
- Developing self-esteem and confidence, demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others;
- Building resilience and the ability to resist unwanted pressures, recognising the influence and impact of the media, internet and peer groups and so developing the ability to assess pressures and respond appropriately;
- Being patient, delaying gratification and learning to recognise the appropriate stages in the development of relationships, and how to love chastely;
- Assessing risks and managing behaviours in order to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity.

To know and understand:

- The Church's teaching on relationships and the nature and meaning of sexual love;
- The Church's teaching on marriage and the importance of marriage and family life;
- The centrality and importance of virtue in guiding human living and loving;
- The physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty;
- The facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation;
- How to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception;
- How to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

### **Children's Questions**

The Governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. They want to ensure that students 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 students, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. (See also Sex and Relationship Guidance, 4.5 'Dealing with questions' 0116/2000, Department for Education and Employment, July 2000 for more detail)



Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, eg where a child or young person's questions hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature.

## **SPECIFIC ISSUES**

The following issues may occur as part of education. Staff, parents and students need to understand the schools' procedures.

### **Confidentiality and Advice**

All Governors, all teachers, all support staff, all parents and all students must be made aware of this policy, particularly as it relates to issues of advice and confidentiality.

All lessons, especially those in the RSE programme, will have the best interests of the students at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and sex, developing appropriate personal and social skills and becoming appreciative of the values and attitudes which underpin the Christian understanding of what it means to be fully human.

Students will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in the programme. Teachers will always help students facing personal difficulties, in line with the School's pastoral care policy. Teachers should explain to students that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance. Teachers will explain that in such circumstance they would have to inform others, eg parents, Head Teacher, but that the students would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

### **Complaints Procedure**

Any complaints about the sex education curriculum should be made to the Head Teacher who will report to the Governors when appropriate.

### **Parents and Carers**

We recognise that parents (and other carers who stand in their place) are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we will support parents and carers by providing material to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help parents/carers to find out more. Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning.

Parents must be consulted before this policy is ratified by the Governors. They will be consulted at every stage of the development of the RSE programme, as well as during the process of monitoring, review and evaluation. They will be able to view the resources used by the School in the RSE programme. Our aim is that, at the end of the consultation process, every parent and carer will have full confidence in the School's RSE programme to meet their child's needs.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RSE except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the School by contacting the Head Teacher. The School will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning.

We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.

**Dissemination of Policy**

The policy is on the school website, and parents receive a letter annually as a reminder of the policy's existence. Parents are provided with a summary of the programme for the year and there is an annual reminder of the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the sex education programme.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

The RSE Co-ordinator will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of students work at regular intervals. The programme will be evaluated biannually by means of questionnaires/response sheets/needs assessment given to students, and/or by discussion with students, staff and parents. The results of the evaluation should be reported to these groups of 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.

**Other policies which have relevance to sex education are:**

Accessibility Policy  
Behaviour policy including (Anti-Bullying)  
Child Protection  
Health and Safety

**APPENDICES**

Full scheme of work  
Resources  
The Fundamentals of Catholic Morality