



ST EDMUND'S COLLEGE  
& PREP SCHOOL

## ST EDMUND'S COLLEGE RELATIONSHIP and SEX EDUCATION POLICY

**“I HAVE COME THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE  
AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL”**

*John 10:10*

### **Summary**

The purpose of this policy is to provide parents with information on the delivery of Sex and Relationships Education to their children at St Edmund's College. The key points from the policy for parents are the following:

1. St Edmund's College aims to deliver Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in accordance with the mission of the school, the values of the Gospel and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.
2. St Edmund's College recognises that parents are the primary educators of their children. Sex and Relationship Education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must be carried out in consultation with them;
3. St Edmund's College aims to deliver a developmental programme, which offers a gradual and positive education, and helps our young people develop a properly informed conscience;
4. St Edmund's College aims to educate the whole person. The RSE programme will offer factual information within the wider context of true Christian values and moral principles.
5. The RSE programme will be a whole school approach, which involves the total experience of life in the school through the formal and “hidden” curriculum.

The Governors are responsible for reviewing and monitoring the implementation of this policy. The delivery of the RSE programme is the responsibility of the headmaster, co-ordinated jointly through the RE, PSHE and Science departments of the Senior School.

### **Introduction**

In Sacred Scripture and the teaching of the Catholic Church, the dignity of the human person is proclaimed<sup>1</sup>. “Christian, remember your dignity”<sup>2</sup>. No more so is this dignity reflected than in the human vocation to love. “God is love and in himself he lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in his own image . . . God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion.”<sup>3</sup>Sexuality is a fundamental component of the human person and of expressing the Christian vocation to love. It is, therefore, an integral part of the development and education of every person.

In his Apostolic Exhortation on the Mission of the Christian family, Pope John Paul II reserves an important place to sex education as valuable to the human person. “Sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person - body, emotions and soul - and manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love”<sup>4</sup>. RSE is directed towards the realisation of the full human person and the call to self-giving love.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gen. 1:26-27; Deut 30:19; Ps. 8:5-7; Jn 12: 32 and 1 Cor 15:22; also *Gaudium et Spes* 27 and Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* 3

<sup>2</sup> Pope St Leo the Great “Sermon XXI” *On the Feast of the Nativity I*

<sup>3</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church 2331

<sup>4</sup> Pope John Paul II *Familiaris Consortio* 37

The Church recognises the parents as the primary educators of their children. It is in the home that children should receive the most authentic teaching of self-giving love. It is the work of schools to offer an education in service of and in harmony with parents.

As a basic norm, sex education aims to enable every human person to live out their Christian vocation to love. In order for the sexuality of every young person to reach its full realisation, sex education must proclaim the value of chastity. It is the duty of parents and schools to teach the expressions of human love appropriate to the particular states of Christian vocation especially marriage. The Church also reminds parents and schools of the Christian calling to celibacy. In the commitment to an enlightened education in chastity, "Christian parents, discerning the signs of God's call, will devote special attention and care to education in virginity or celibacy as the supreme form of that self-giving that constitutes the very meaning of human sexuality"<sup>5</sup>. In all aspects, it is the primary norm of self-giving love modelled in the communion of the Holy Trinity, which interprets and formulates how every human person lives out their sexuality.

### **Methodology**

As they advance in years children should be given "positive and prudent sexual education"<sup>6</sup>. At St Edmund's we recognise that the primary responsibility for education in sexuality and relationships rests with parents. In collaboration with parents the school has an obligation to help ensure that pupils understand their sexuality and behave responsibly, informed by the moral teaching of the Church. Within this context, Relationship and Sex Education ("RSE") addresses the range of issues concerning friendships, family life, emotional development and other matters pertaining to sexual relationships. This education takes place across the curriculum. RSE is incorporated and delivered through the Science, Religious Education and PSHE curriculum and taught by teachers whose responsibility it is to deliver these topics in line with the teaching of the Catholic Church.

### **Statutory Obligations**

School Governors have a statutory obligation under the terms of the 1986 Education Act, 1988 Education Reform Act and the 1993 Education Act (section 2) to determine their school policy regarding sex education. Governors will make sure that parents understand on entry that education for personal relationships is intrinsic in Catholic education. (Any parent who wishes to withdraw their child from the RSE Programme should contact the Headteacher). The Church reminds Schools that the fulfilment of this statutory obligation must be exercised in consultation with parents. "Sex education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must always be carried out under their attentive guidance, whether at home or in educational establishments chosen and controlled by them"<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid 37

<sup>6</sup> Educational Guidance on Human Love 1 (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education)

<sup>7</sup> *Familiaris Consortio* 37

## Consultation

This policy was developed by the PSHE Coordinator in consultation with the Assistant Head Pastoral, the Senior Leadership Team and staff.

We have taken account of:

- RSE Guidance (DfE 2017)
- Guidance on PSHE (DfE 2013)
- Catholic Education Service Example Secondary RSE Policy (September 2015)
- Policy Statement (DfE 2017)

Consultation with parents/carers and governors will take place following the dissemination of this policy and be informed by the details within.

## Aims and Objectives

The aims of the School Relationships and Sex Education Programme and Policy are:

- To present a vision of an ideal of sexuality that is fully human
- To facilitate a whole school approach to Sex Education for family life
- To provide opportunities to clarify values and attitudes that surround personal relationships and family life
- To impart factual information
- To develop pupils' ability to make informed decisions by helping them to determine their own values in the positive moral framework offered by the Catholic Church
- To prepare the pupils for adult life

## Defining Relationships and Sex Education

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.'<sup>1</sup> It is about the development of the pupil's knowledge and understanding of her or him as a sexual being (appropriate to age), about what it means to be fully human, called to live in positive relationships with self and others and being enabled to make moral decisions in conscience which also protect their wellbeing. The DfE identifies three main elements as detailed below:

- **Knowledge and Understanding:** Emotional, social and physical development, body image, human sexuality, gender identity, different types of families, different types of relationships, healthy and unhealthy relationships, sex, consent, rights and responsibilities to others, reproduction, sexual health, contraception, the range of local and national sexual health services, reasons and benefits for delaying sexual activity, law about sexual activity and the use of technology and social media, misuse of drugs and alcohol and sexual activity, sexual exploitation and violence in all types of relationships (including personal and family relationships), the impact of pornography on relationships, FGM, and being safe (including online).
- **Personal and Social Skills:** Managing emotions and relationships, developing self respect and empathy for others alongside the resilience to cope with change, making choices and understanding the consequences of choices, managing conflict, dealing with peer pressure, recognising and avoiding exploitation and abuse, communicating respectfully, making responsible and safe decisions, identifying, assessing and managing risk, asking for help and accessing advice and services.
- **Attitudes and Values:** Understanding a range of views about relationships and sex in society, respect in relationships, the importance of stable and loving relationships including marriage and civil partnerships, respect, love and care, rights and respect for rights in relationships, the value of family life, and fostering gender equality, acceptance of difference and diversity. Understanding that violence, coercion and sexual exploitation in relationships is unacceptable (including forced marriage), understanding that discrimination based on gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, culture, age or faith is unacceptable, thus promoting equality and challenging inequality

## **Catholic Rationale**

'I have come that you might have life and have it to the full.' (John - 10:10)

All education in a Catholic College is underpinned by the belief in the unique dignity of the human person, made in the image of God. We are involved in relationships and sex education precisely because of these Christian beliefs about the human person and our relationship with God. There is no longer sacred or profane, natural or supernatural, mortification or prayer—because it is one and the same Spirit who brings it about that the Christian will see and 'find God in all things'. As such, Christians must strive to know and understand the gifts which have been given to us by our Creator, in order to fully appreciate His power and His love for us. Therefore, our approach to RSE is rooted in the Catholic teachings around the human person, presented in the positive framework of broader Christian ideals.

At the heart of Christian life is the Trinity - Father, Son and Spirit in communion, united in a loving relationship, embracing all people and all creation. RSE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationships (from the public to the private) as it is there that sexuality grows and develops.

Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales and as advocated by the DfE (and the Welsh Assembly Government) RSE will be firmly embedded in the PSHE framework as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils. It will be centred on Christ's vision of being human as good news and will be positive and prudent, showing the potential for development, while enabling understanding and appreciation of the dangers and risks which may be faced in the real world.

All RSE will be in accordance with the Church's moral teaching. It will enshrine Catholic values relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life, whilst acknowledging that all pupils have a fundamental right to respect irrespective of their background or identity. 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 His beauty, and are an undeniable part of divine creation. RSE will reflect this through ensuring students recognise the importance of diversity, both in human beings and in relationships or sexuality. RSE will also promote those virtues which are essential in responding to 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.

## **Programmes of Study**

In the Senior School SRE is taught from Years 7 to 13. The programme is delivered as a discrete unit with input from PSHE Education and Citizenship, Religious Education and Science.

The programme aims across KS3-5 to implement the following objectives in the school's policy:

- To present clearly a Catholic sexual ethic based on the teaching and wisdom of the Church
- To encourage the development of a personal moral code rooted in Gospel values
- To facilitate in the pupils the development of self-love and self-worth as creatures made in the image and likeness of God
- To encourage growth in self-respect, self-restraint and respect for others
- To develop an understanding of the emotional, moral, spiritual, social and personal aspects of human sexuality

- To enable the pupils to develop an understanding of chaste love as central to human relationships and the way in which this is expressed in marriage and other states of life e.g. the priesthood and religious life
- To bring about a deeper appreciation of the importance and value of family life, while appreciating the varied forms the family can take in the modern world and the responsibilities of parenthood
- To help pupils appreciate the difficulties, responsibilities and joys of Marriage, including family planning and bringing up children
- To help pupils recognise the physical, emotional and moral risks of irresponsible sexual behaviour and to develop an awareness of their legal obligations regarding sexual behaviour
- To promote attitudes to sexual activity that are caring and reflect a sense of personal responsibility
- To enable pupils to consider critically the values of the modern world in general, and their teenage subculture in particular, with regard to human sexuality
- To value human life and be able to discuss contemporary secular practices that challenge this (e.g. artificial contraception and abortion)
- To impart full knowledge and understanding of the details of puberty and human procreation in their physical as well as emotional, spiritual and moral aspects
- To know about homosexuality, and the teaching of the Church and the law of the land
- To give knowledge of all sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS
- To give clear guidance to pupils with particular regard to their personal safety and welfare in the matter of physical and sexual abuse

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Monitoring and Evaluation of the SRE programme will be the responsibility of the PSHE Coordinator and the Assistant Head Pastoral.

### **Rationale**

Young people are continually exposed to overt and covert sexual images and messages through the media and from their peers. Many of the messages they receive are either mythical or misunderstood and ignorance can often be difficult to admit. There are also the added dimensions of prejudice, sexism and discrimination that complicate an already confusing picture.

Within the school context Sex and Relationship Education affords a positive opportunity to address the needs of young people within a Catholic Christian perspective in a world that may present different pressures and values and help them to make their own informed judgements. This will be encouraged by:

- Presenting facts in an objective and balanced way
- Creating a positive and secure environment for open discussion and constructive critical thinking, enabling pupils to discuss issues without embarrassment or fear of ridicule
- Offering opportunities to share and explore feelings, values and attitudes
- Giving opportunities to pupils to evaluate the information they receive from peers, the media and today's society in the light of Church teaching

### **Context**

Information about sex and sexuality will be given in the context and value of human relationships (including family, parenthood, friendship). The sound basis of Catholic teaching provides a strong moral framework to all that is taught in school. The ability to be able to

make use of knowledge with dignity in a positive and respectful way is 'empowerment', a social skill that can evolve through decision making and problem solving situations. The development of the young peoples' self-esteem is something that is an integral part of the school ethos and will be vital to their decision-making capacity as an adult. Therefore, much of the sex education teaching and learning methodologies will aim to develop the skills in this area.

### **Child Protection/Safeguarding concerns**

St Edmund's College is committed to ensuring the welfare and protection of all children in their care and this commitment is a fundamental part of the role of every employee. Any concerns which arise during the delivery of SRE will be reported immediately to the Designated Person for Child Protection, Mr Gareth West.

### **Contraception and abortion advice and information**

Advice of a personal nature must never be given in the classroom situation, but instead the pupil should be seen on an individual basis. Whilst teachers will be eager to take a pastoral interest in their pupils, they must never give advice on contraception to them, not even in a one-to-one situation.

The Senior School Nurse, informed of the school's ethos, will follow the NMC (Nurses and Midwifery Council) code of professional conduct. Pupils will be encouraged to seek advice from their parents whenever possible.

The school provides information about artificial contraception and abortion within the context of Catholic education, but does not promote them. The context of Catholic education should take the form of teachers educating pupils on the Sanctity of Human Life.

### **Equal Opportunities**

SRE is seen as an important vehicle to deliver many aspects of equality education as SRE will inevitably encompass the issues of equality, gender, culture, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS, discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping. Throughout the teaching of such issues pupils are encouraged to take on a mature approach to the complex nature of the work.

In the Senior School, all pupils must be afforded access to the entire content of the SRE programme. The programme will usually be taught in mixed classes, ensuring that both boys and girls receive the same information and can participate in class discussions. The opportunity for sensitive topics to be dealt with in separate groups will be facilitated as necessary. We are aware of and sensitive to the range of learning needs of our children. Attention and care will be taken to ensure that pupils with disabilities or specific learning and emotional needs are given appropriate, individual and professional advice if required. Their parents will be consulted and informed of the curriculum.

### **External Visitors**

We often call upon external visitors to deliver aspects of our RSE programme, particularly in Sixth Form. 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 College delivering a session. Health professionals always follow the College'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.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Governors**

The Governing Body will review and regularly update the SRE policy, in consultation with parents, and in keeping with Catholic teaching.

### **Headmaster**

The Headmaster will have overall responsibility for the delivery of the SRE programme in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church. The Headmaster will delegate responsibilities appropriately.

### **PSHE & RSE Coordinator**

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.

### **Teachers**

All teachers have a responsibility of care. They should contribute to the guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of their pupils. Teachers who are asked to teach SRE should ensure that they do so in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of St Edmund's College and the teachings of the Catholic Church. The staff involved in this very important work should be properly trained and highly motivated and given appropriate guidance.

### **Parents**

Recognising that parents are the primary educators of their children, and they should have a concern for, and accept responsibility for their knowledge and understanding of their sexual development.

### **Wider Community**

The school will make appropriate use of external agencies, speakers and groups provided that they adhere to the school's guidelines which are rooted in the teachings of the Catholic Church.

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