



Mission statement

Respect yourself

Respect everyone in our school community,

Respect everyone in our local community,

Respect everyone in our global community,

But most of all, respect God our father in Heaven.

St Helen's Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) policy

The Bishop's Conference of England and Wales set out their ideas about Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) in a document entitled 'Learning to love'. It states;

'All of us spend our entire lives learning how to love. We never stop learning because all of our efforts will be imperfect, since we are imperfect human creatures, essentially in need of the grace of God and of His merciful healing. Marital love, which we see as the model of all loving relationships, is a continuous lesson in learning how to love, with the family as a school of loving where parents and children learn from each other how to love, and how not to love.'

It continues, 'Parents have the prime responsibility in teaching their children how to build healthy, loving relationships, but Catholic schools play a vital part in supporting parents. We expect all Catholic schools to ensure that space is made in the curriculum for Relationship and Sex Education (RSE). The content of what is taught must express the teaching of the Church, and should be delivered to suit the age of the children or young people to whom it is addressed. We all need to recognise that without providing an education in this area, we leave many young people vulnerable to receiving their education second-hand, and often from sources which damage them and their capacity to love.'

The Government have also recently opened a consultation to review Relationships and Sex Education. They want to support all young people to stay safe and prepare for life in modern Britain by making Relationships Education (Primary), Relationships and Sex Education (RSE - Secondary) and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE – Primary and Secondary) statutory in all schools by 2019. Currently the Department for Education recommends that :

All primary schools should have a Sex and Relationship Education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the children. It should ensure that both boys and girls know about puberty and how a baby is born – as set out in National Curriculum for Science.

All children, including those who develop earlier than the average, need to know about puberty before they experience the onset of physical changes. In the early primary school years, education about relationships needs to focus on friendship, bullying and the building of self-esteem.

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 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.

RATIONALE

'I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL'

(Jn.10.10)

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. 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.

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.

VALUES AND VIRTUES

St Helen's uses the Diocesan relationship education programme 'Journey in love'. This 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 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 explored and promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

AIM OF RSE

St Helen's is committed 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. Furthermore, 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.

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 God's people;
- 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;
- 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.
- 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.

INCLUSION AND DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to pupils' 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 pupils 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.

EQUALITIES OBLIGATIONS

Under the Equalities Act 2010 we will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children.

PARENTS AND CARERS

We recognise that parents and carers are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children. Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the relationship education programme will begin in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions their children may ask. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RSE except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum for Science.

Children should be helped to recognise and to seek out positive influences, while shunning the things that cripple their capacity for love. Responsible parents begin this process with their children from a young age, and it is at the forefront of what they hope to find for their children in a good school. But parents could learn from the example set by schools in protecting their children from damaging internet content, so that whether at school or in the privacy of the family home, children are protected from damaging material that can overwhelm and in Pope Francis' words 'cripple our capacity for love'.

Should parents wish to withdraw their children from RSE lessons they are asked to notify the school by contacting the Headteacher.

BALANCED CURRICULUM

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced curriculum 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. 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.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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.

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 pupils. Teachers will be expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND CURRICULUM SUBJECTS

This RSE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHE framework. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents (for example, Bullying policy, Safeguarding Policy etc.)

Pupils with particular difficulties whether of a physical or intellectual nature will receive appropriately differentiated support in order to enable them to achieve mature knowledge, understanding and skills. Teaching methods will be adapted to meet the varying needs of this group of pupils.

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

St Helen's wants to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. We 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. St Helen's believes that children are best educated and 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.

Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time. In these cases the teacher will refer the child to their parents.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE AT RISK

Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place. Effective RSE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue. Teachers will need to be aware of the needs of their pupils and not let any fears and worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects that a child or young person is a victim of or is at risk of abuse they are required to follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ADVICE

Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in the 'Journey of Love' programme. Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties but they should explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive. Teachers will explain that in such circumstance they would have to inform others, e.g., parents, Head teacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

As we boldly aim to make God's definition of love our own, all of us are bound to fall short. But with every fall, we give Christ the opportunity to help us start again, and travel 'arm in arm' with us as we journey through life.

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8