



St. Gregory's Catholic High School

RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Monitoring

The implementation of the policy will be monitored by the Assistant Headteacher (Catholic Life).

Evaluation

The policy was reviewed annually by the Assistant Headteacher (Catholic Life) and Senior Leadership Team on 12th February 2021 prior to the submission of the policy to Governors' Community Committee for scrutiny and recommendation to the Full Governing Body for approval.

Policy Review Dates:

Date last approved by Full Governing Body: 7th December 2017

Date submitted to Governors' Committee: 25th February 2021

Date submitted to Full Governing Body: 31st March 2021

Review Frequency: Every 3 years

Start date for policy review: January 2024

Aims

The aims and objectives of the Relationship and Sex education policy at St Gregory's is to allow its pupils to make informed choices concerning their relationships, based on a personal, moral and social understanding of the importance of sex as part of a life-long and stable relationship.

As a Catholic School we aim for all of our students to:

- Understand that sex is valued and treasured as a gift from God. It is sacramental and finds its proper expression in marriage. Those things which devalue and degrade sex or which deny its life-giving potential make us less than the people God intends us to be.
- Appreciate the value of stable family life, marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood.
- Make informal decisions regarding their sexuality based on sound, accurate knowledge, decisions that will equip them to avoid risks such as HIV and AIDS, unwanted pregnancies, STIs and unfulfilled relationships.
- Show respect, consideration and understanding towards others, who may differ in terms of gender, sexual orientation, religious and cultural traditions and social background.
- The overall aim is to support the personal, moral and social development of all pupils at the school, 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 any abuse.
- Explore their feelings, attitudes and values and feel comfortable about their sexuality.
- View their own sexuality as a fundamental and important element of their own person, which affects how we relate to others.
- The inclusion of positive, person-centred education is at the heart of Catholic Christian education. This education is fundamentally about the development, growth and journey of the whole person towards becoming fully human, fully alive as a unique creation made in God's image.
- Ultimately, the school aims to have played an important part in the formation of young people who will value marriage and family life and who will be able to enjoy sex as part of a lifelong, stable relationship free from guilt and inhibition

Objectives

The following objectives are a statement of St. Gregory's Catholic High School

commitment to a whole school, pupil-centred approach to education in sexuality, but will alter as the priorities for Relationship and Sex Education change and the programme develops.

- To represent the Catholic Church's teaching and perspective throughout the programme.
- To explore the concept of responsibility within a moral framework.
- To provide information and knowledge to encourage self-empowerment and assertiveness.
- To examine and challenge pupils' perceptions and opinions towards others.
- To provide an environment in which pupils can feel secure, comfortable and confident in exploring their sexuality and related issues.
- To help pupils recognise that sexuality is an essential part of human beings and fundamental to the way in which we as humans relate to one another, within the community.
- To have an awareness of where pupils are in their knowledge and understanding, so that concerns can be identified.
- To engender growth in self-respect and 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 some understanding that love is central and the basis of meaningful relationships.
- To enable pupils 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 pupils to reflect on their relationships and recognise the qualities that help relationships for themselves.
- To encourage pupils to be aware of their attitudes and values and have a sense of responsibility for themselves.
- To have some understanding of and to give sensitive consideration to the beliefs, values and cultures of others.
- To provide a forum where pupils can share their concerns and offer a climate of support where they know they will be listened to sensitively.
- To correct misinformation and to explain the process of human procreation

- To enable pupils 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 pupils resist peer, social and media pressures where necessary.
- To help pupils develop their critical faculties and be aware of the values conveyed by the media in relation to self-image and sexuality.
- To provide room in the Relationship and Sex Education programme to address sensitive issues such as homosexuality, birth control, HIV, AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases, abortion and sexual abuse.
- To keep parents informed of the purpose and content of the programme, to involve parents at every stage in the delivery of the programme, and to consult parents at the outset, seeking their support for the programme.

Underlying Principles

This policy has been prepared following changes in the law in relation to relationship and sex education in schools, and in particular the requirement to place such education in a moral framework, having due regard for the value of family life.

Relationship and sex education has become mandatory in schools within the framework of the National Curriculum (in particular in Health Education) but with an opt out clause for those parents who wish their children to be excluded from elements not covered elsewhere in the National Curriculum.

The concern and sensitivity around AIDS and HIV, coupled with parental and educators anxiety over the misinformation concerning sex and healthy relationships provided by the media, has placed greater emphasis on the requirement for Relationship and Sex Education in schools and at home.

The Bishops of England and Wales have, in Conference, expressed the vision that education in sexual matters should have a whole person and whole school approach in line with the mission of schools as Christian communities. This is now the policy of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

The time pressures on the timetable since the introduction of the National Curriculum are such that unless relationship and sex education is specifically incorporated into the curriculum of the school, then it may be under resourced in terms of teaching time and educational materials.

This policy represents an extension of the existing mission and ethos of the school and the principles laid out below restate the school's approach to education in terms of relationship and sex education. These principles also encapsulate the Church's teaching, Government legislation and the results of research and experience in

relationship and sex education.

- Pupils have a right to a curriculum which will help them to develop spiritually, intellectually, morally, socially and culturally and also prepare them for adult life. Relationship and sex education is integral to this process.
- Children and young people belong to different communities, their homes, their schools and their neighbourhood. We must try to foster a true partnership involving home, school and parish community. Each should be as supportive to the other as possible.
- Education in sexuality should be developmental; relationship and sex education should enable sexuality to be integrated into personal growth from infancy through adolescence and beyond. This requires both primary and secondary phases to meet the physical, spiritual, moral and emotional requirements of their pupils through the education they offer. This necessarily involves dialogue and cooperation between primary and secondary spheres of schooling and with parents.
- Education in sexuality is a part of education in relationships. Every young person is entitled to experience a school climate in which the quality of relationships between staff and pupils, between the pupils themselves, is marked by honesty, personal identification, warmth, trust and security.

For such education to be successful it must be fully integrated into the curriculum, for, by its very nature, it is cross curricular: Science, Religious Education, Health Education, literature, the arts and PE all have a key role to play. The whole curriculum conveys value and helps in the moral growth of pupils.

“The Church is formally opposed to an often widespread form of imparting sex information dissociated from moral principles” (Familiaris Consortio 37)

- Sexuality is essential to our personal identity. It is God’s gift to us. As we grow in our capacity to love, in all contexts of our lives, not just the sexual, we are open and make present the divine in our hearts.
- As we help our children and young people to grow and develop, to do justice to their potential, we have the obligation to offer our children and young people Christ’s vision of being human as “Good News”. We must have good news to offer them in their understanding of their sexuality as well as of every other dimension of their lives.
- Sexuality is a fundamental component of personality, manifestation, communication with others, feeling, expressing, and living human love. It is an integral part of the development of the personality and of the educative process.
- So that we can offer relationship and sex education in the spirit of “Good News”,

with regard to our becoming more fully human, our education should not be “problem” or “crisis-led”. It should be positive, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.

- Relationship and Sex Education should be integrated into the curriculum fully and not isolated in any way. All subjects have a part to play in Relationship and Sex Education, either as part of the Relationship and Sex Education programme or by reinforcing the messages contained within the programme when relevant.

What is Relationship and Sex Education at St Gregory’s?

Relationship and sex education concerns the acceptance of one’s own sexuality and the recognition that it is an expression of one’s personality and relationship with others. Education in sexuality covers all the learning required in order to understand our own and other’s sexuality and to develop skills and relationships, based on informed decisions and choices.

Relationship and sex education encompasses more than an understanding of the workings of the reproductive system; it also embraces the understanding of values, attitudes and beliefs towards anatomy, physiology and relationships. Above all, it includes the development of emotional maturity and the acceptance of responsibility and commitment.

The following statements concerning Relationship and Sex Education can be found in the Catholic Education Services guidance on “Education in Sexuality”.

- Education in sexuality is an umbrella term for all the learning we need in order to understand and value our own and other’s sexuality.
- Education in sexuality is not just about biology and how the reproductive system works. It is about relationship, feelings and behaviour.
- Education in sexuality is more than a body of knowledge; it is about gender, about roles in society, about making choices.
- Education in sexuality is about learning to accept one’s own sexuality and recognise its expression as part of one’s personality and relationship with others.
- Education in sexuality is about facilitating growth and emotional maturity, helping the individual to go beyond self and to have responsibility.
- Education for the emotional and sexual life is above all to help pupils to have a sense of the other, teaching them to listen, love, to have compassion and tenderness.
- Education in sexuality is a life-long process.
- Education in sexuality recognises that human sexuality is a gift from God. It is concerned with the spiritual and moral as well as the physical and social.

- Education in sexuality promotes discernment concerning different views of sexuality and helps pupils to take responsibility for their actions.

Guidance relevant to St. Gregory's Catholic school in relation to Church teaching:

- Education should promote the full development of the human person.
- Children and young people have a right to be encouraged to weigh moral values with an upright conscience, and to embrace them by personal choice.
- Since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. The family is the first school of those social virtues which every society needs.
- While belonging primarily to the family, the task of imparting education requires the help of society as a whole.
- Children and young people should receive a positive and prudent education in matters relating to sex.

Organisation of School Relationship and Sex Education

PSHE Curriculum Leader: Mr L MacKenzie
The Curriculum Leader of RE: Mrs R Sherrington
The Curriculum Leader of Science: Mrs H Geeson

Relationship and Sex Education Teaching Groups: tutor groups for RSE within PSHE curriculum; allocated Science sets.

All staff within RE and Science need to provide an open, honest and understanding environment, so that everyone in the school can feel sufficiently comfortable to be able to express their feelings and concerns about this very important aspect of development.

Relationship and Sex Education is taught at KS3 & 4 in the following subject areas:

Science:

As part of the National Curriculum, human reproduction is taught in the Science Department.

Religious Education:

The concepts of marriage and relationships, contraception, divorce, euthanasia and abortion are taught within RE lessons. The Catholic perspective is taught and examined as are other perspectives and viewpoints.

PSHE:

Certain elements of the SRE curriculum will be delivered by the form tutor team in PSHE lessons across all five year groups at St Gregory's. The Head of PSHE and 2nd in PSHE will be responsible for resourcing lessons and ensuring that staff have had access to Continuing Professional Development sessions on SRE. The Catholic perspective will be made clear so that all staff - Catholic and non-Catholic - feel happy in their knowledge and understanding before delivering sessions to pupils.

Confidentiality

Children and young people may make personal disclosures in group settings where an atmosphere of trust is created. With young people, it is important that their teacher reaches agreement with the group about confidentiality before personal disclosures are made, however confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if there is cause for concern that needs follow up, in line with The Child Protection Policy.

If, during the course of a discussion either in a lesson or mentoring meeting, a teacher becomes concerned regarding a possible Child Protection issue they should follow the School's Child Protection Policy.

Sensitive Issues

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Within the school curriculum we inform all pupils of the different sexually transmitted diseases, symptoms, effects and prevention.

HIV & AIDS

We are committed to the Borough's policy on HIV & AIDS, and we endeavour to act in such a way so that no one living with or affected by HIV and AIDS, is excluded or prevented from benefiting from the services our school offer.

Confidentiality concerning a person's HIV status must be safeguarded at all times.

We endeavour to foster a sense of responsibility and respect for oneself and others, and to provide young people with the self-esteem, confidence and skills they need to develop healthy relationships.

CONTRACEPTION

The DfE makes the following statement about contraceptive advice:-

"It is important to distinguish between, on the one hand, the schools function of providing education generally about sexual matters and on the other, counselling and

advice to individual pupils on these issues particularly if this relates to their own sexual behaviour”.

“Particular care must be exercised in relation to contraceptive advice to pupils under 16, for whom sexual intercourse is unlawful. The general rule must be that giving an individual pupil advice on such matters without parental knowledge or consent would be an inappropriate exercise of a teacher’s professional responsibilities”.

If a teacher believes a pupil is in danger or suspects sexual abuse he/she should refer the matter to the Child Protection Officer who should then follow School and Borough Child Protection Policy.

As a Catholic School, a teacher should point out to pupils, as appropriate, the Catholic Church’s position regarding sex outside of marriage, contraception etc.

HOMOSEXUALITY, TRANSEXUALITY and TRANSGENDER

As in line with Warrington Equal Opportunities and Lesbian and Gay Policies, we endeavour to explore this issue in a sensitive and caring way. As teachers, we have a responsibility to educate all students about the diversity within society, to encourage pupils to feel positive about their choices and feel free from discrimination.

The issue of homosexuality is addressed through the wider issue of prejudice. As a Catholic School, we point out to pupils the Church’s teachings and we encourage pupils to be non-judgemental in their daily lives towards a person of a different creed, race, sexual orientation, sex or ability through the academic and pastoral curriculum, in lessons, assemblies, retreats and additional Citizenship days. We uphold the teachings of Pope Francis when he said “If someone is **gay** and searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge?”

Pupils can be referred to the School Nurse and/or Learning Mentor to discuss any issues of concern to them.

APPENDIX A

Principles which inform Policy and Practice for Relationship and Sex Education in a Catholic School

What we want to say: Some Basic Principles

Underlying “Life and Love” are four key concepts:

- a) A positive approach to sexuality

Sex is God-given: God made sex.

It is good.

It is human, for compassion and love.

It is creative; it brings about unity and new life.

Sex is to be valued and treasured as the gift of God.

Sex is sacramental and finds its proper expression in marriage. The exchange of vows in the sacrament of marriage does not consummate the marriage, but sexual intercourse does.

Those things which devalue and degrade sex or which deny its life-giving potential make us less than the people God intends us to be. They take away from our humanity and are sinful.

(b) We make moral decisions

Part of our human nature is to make moral decisions. When we do this we use our consciences, which need to be informed and educated. Even indifference is itself a moral decision.

To be fully human and to be sexually responsible is to be in control of oneself.

To be sexual does not always imply that we are engaged in sexual acts.

Celibacy has its place in our community. All people, married or single, are called to live chastely.

(c) Christian Responsibility

To be good is to be responsible for others. The intimacy of sexual acts, as well as their possible consequences, demand a responsible and loving attitude to others. People should be aware of the nature of human responsibility, within families, in marriage and in the wider community. Part of that responsibility is an awareness of basic biological matters as they relate to sex.

Marriage is not a disposable commodity, nor is it a 'ticket to sex'. It is a stable, exclusive relationship. A Christian school has a special duty to bear witness to the indissoluble nature of a sacramental, consummated marriage.

Christians have a duty to be good citizens. In particular, they are called to protect the weak, the defenceless and the poor. In this context we think particularly of abortion.

Being a responsible Christian does not simply mean living out and encouraging chastity. It also means being there when chastity is threatened or breaks down. We have a duty to inform young people of the moral, spiritual and physical damage misuses of sex can bring, and about how they can help to limit the effects of that damage to themselves in society.

(d) The Forgiveness of God

We live in an age when more or less explicit sexual material is widely available, and in a culture which accepts premarital sexual intercourse as the norm, and perhaps until recently, even as a recreational activity.

Young people must constantly be reminded that God is loving and forgiving. No action of ours can quench His love for us, and He continually offers us reconciliation when we fail in our humanity.

PROCEDURES FOR STAFF

In order for this policy to be successful, every member of staff must make Relationship and Sex Education a high priority and the importance of the education being provided.

All staff, teaching and non-teaching must lead by example.

In addition to this there are the following specific responsibilities:

Governors

- Have responsibility for ensuring that, in consultation with the parents and teachers, there is a Relationship and Sex Education policy, which is in keeping with Catholic teaching.
- Ensure that the policy is available to parents and that parents know of their right to withdraw their children.
- Will ensure that the programme and the resources are suitably monitored and evaluated. (is this a new bullet point?)

Headteacher

- To oversee and keep Relationship and Sex Education and procedural policy under review with Senior Leaders and School Governors
- To report to Governors with regards to practice within Relationship and Sex Education.
- Will ensure that the programme and the resources are suitably monitored and evaluated.

Senior Leadership Team

- To discuss any issues with regards to SRE with the Curriculum Leaders within the subject areas they line manage.
- To be role models and educators in this dimension of pupils' education whilst supporting teachers in their role as outlined within the School SRE Policy.

RSE/PSHE Curriculum Leader

- The subject leader will maintain an overview of SRE provision and have overall responsibility for its development.
- This will include keeping up to date with developments and good practice, developing the provision to meet pupils' needs,
- Also providing support and resources for staff, arranging staff training, liaison with outside agencies and monitoring and evaluation.
- Plan the PSHE Programme in line with the relationship and sex policy

RE and Science Curriculum Leaders

- The subject leader will maintain an overview of SRE provision and have overall responsibility for its development within their subject areas.
- To liaise with the Curriculum Leader PSHE to ensure provision is planned in line with whole school SRE policy.
- This will include keeping up to date with developments and good practice, developing the provision to meet pupils' needs,
- Also providing support and resources for staff, arranging staff training, liaison with outside agencies and monitoring and evaluation.

All staff, specifically form tutors and teachers of RE and Science

- All the adult members of the school community are themselves role models and educators in this dimension of pupils' education.
- All teachers and non-teaching staff involved in the school's SRE provision have a responsibility to deliver quality SRE within the planned provision and which meets the daily needs of the children.
- To utilise the materials and resources within Subject Areas to plan lessons that meet the needs of learners.
- Teacher will be consulted about the school's approach to SRE and aided in their work by provision of resources, background information, support and advice and access to appropriate training.
- Teachers also have a duty to bring to the head teacher's attention any child protection issues (see Child Protection Policy for specific guidance).

SENDCO

- To provide support and guidance to students on a regarding any issues relating to the RSE Policy.
- To work with the relevant SLT, Pupil Progress Managers and Curriculum Leaders to ensure that the RSE Policy is reflected in the work of the SEN Department.

School Nurse

- Pupils are able to speak to the school's nurse about health concerns and likewise she is involved in talking to small groups of pupils about health concerns etc. The school's nurse is expected to follow the guidelines in the school's RSE and Child Protection Policy

Parents

- We recognise that parents are the first educators of their children with regard to relationships and sex. The school will seek to support parents in this role. Both the Church and the State recognise the central and primary role of parents in assisting their children's physical, spiritual and psychological growth in preparation for the challenges and responsibilities of adult sexual life.
- We hope that by providing parents with adequate, accurate information regarding Relationship and Sex Education in our school, any worries or anxieties they may have will be allayed.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from lessons that involve relationship and sex education, but not from those aspects which remain in National Curriculum Science. The pupils who are withdrawn will be supervised by a member of staff.

Pupils

- Pupils have an entitlement to quality SRE appropriate to age and circumstance. They will be actively consulted about their SRE needs and their views will be central to developing provision. Pupils have a responsibility to work within agreed ground rules and values. It is hoped that pupils will have the confidence and self-esteem that will enable them to enjoy relationships based on mutual respect, dignity and responsibility.