

St. James' RC Primary School

Relationships and Sex Education

In this policy the Governors and Teachers, in partnership with parents and families, set out their intentions about relationships and sex education (RSE) and our rationale for teaching it to our pupils.

This policy will be reviewed every two years. It will be reviewed again Spring 2019 by Governors, staff and the community of St. James'. It is available for inspection and for parents on the school's website.

In order to formulate this policy the school:

- Consulted with the Diocese, paying heed to the teachings of the Catholic Church;
- Consulted DFE guidance (2000) and looked at the wider national picture in schools other than Faith Schools;
- Consulted with parents;
- Reviewed the curriculum with staff and consulted pupils about healthy living;
- Consulted the school nurse;
- Consulted with Governors.

Our Mission Statement and Intent

... 'To promote positive relationships and respect for self and others' ... (St. James' Mission Statement)

The DFE guidance 2000, defines RSE as '...life-long 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.' (DFE 2000)

The Second Vatican Council saw the need for 'a positive and prudent sex education...seen in the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self- giving. In such a way that the language of sexuality would not be seriously impoverished but illuminated and enriched.'

At St. James' we intend to frame sex education as part of the development of human love, in the context of our faith in God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ. We teach children about the importance of respectful and loving relationships, that are nurtured at home and between friends and families.

We aim to help pupils understand, that the sacrament of marriage is a development of human love, which requires commitment to a loving relationship and is open to the gift of life. We promote fidelity in relationships.

At St. James' we teach pupils to look after their bodies through exercise and healthy eating. We teach them about good medicines and they learn about their physiology. It is our aim to teach children to treat their bodies as a gift from God and to look after themselves. We also stress the importance of mental well- being and ensure that pastoral care is available to support pupils who are going through difficult situations.

We help pupils to understand the importance of making the right choices and to resist peer pressure when it comes to maintaining respect and dignity. This includes the pressures that come with internet use.

Roles

‘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 centres chosen and controlled by them.’
(Pontifical Council for the Family 1995, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*)

At St James’ we believe it is the primary duty of parents to educate their children in matters of human love and the auxiliary, but essential duty of the school, is to support parents where appropriate and provide what is best done in the school context. We believe in answering children’s questions honestly with reference to the guidance given by the Diocesan Education Commission.

The Governors responsibility is to ensure that there is an up to date RSE policy and that it is consistent with all other school policies.

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring that the RSE policy is updated, reviewed and carried out in liaison with the Diocesan Education Commission. It is also the task of the Head Teacher to integrate RSE into the curriculum, ensure that there is adequate pastoral support and liaise with parents.

At St. James’ the RE post holder is responsible for liaising with the Commission about updates to this policy and advises the Head Teacher of any actions that may be necessary. She works with other post holders to ensure that cross-curricular links are effective.

Teachers and other adults are involved in helping children to flourish in their personal and social skills. As well as delivering the curriculum, staff are also role models around the school, giving examples of conflict resolution and establishing relationships of mutual trust and respect. All staff are responsible for the care and safeguarding of pupils and contribute to their well-being.

Rationale

‘I have come that you might have life and have it to the full.’ (Jn 10.10)

At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation. 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 is placed firmly within the context of loving relationships; as it is there that sexuality grows and develops.

In accordance with the Church’s moral teaching, we emphasise the central importance of marriage and the family whilst acknowledging that all pupils have a fundamental right to have their life respected.

It is recognised that for a number of complex reasons, some parents decide to end a marriage because, in spite of every effort to keep the marriage together, it has proved impossible and relationships have become destructive rather than loving. The school will always support children who are finding it hard to come to terms with a marriage breakdown and will never judge; the school will help children affected to remain optimistic about marriage and loving relationships.

How RSE is delivered at St. James’

At St. James' we teach children the importance of building positive relationships with people in a variety of contexts. We teach children about healthy eating and make provision for physical education, encouraging healthy exercise.

Through Science we teach the children about what the body does and how important it is to look after it. Our RE curriculum focuses on spiritual well-being, justice, peace and the dignity of the human being. We teach children to value their bodies as a gift from God. At Easter time, every other year, the children watch chickens hatch from eggs incubated in school. We feel that this introduction to the birth of new life teaches the children about its sanctity.

In PSHE, pupils discuss a variety of topics related to mental and physical well-being. One such topic is 'Good to be Me', which helps children to be at ease with themselves. These topics are linked to assemblies and class work.

In Y5 the school nurse discusses the bodily changes commensurate with puberty. This ensures that the children are aware of the impact of these changes as they become fertile human beings.

In Y6 the school nurse gives a clear and age appropriate information in respect of human reproduction. This is taught within the framework of a loving relationship.

Prior to the visits from the nurse, parents are told about the nature of the RSE teaching and are shown the materials that accompany the teaching, so that they know what type of questions the children may ask at home.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education but not from teaching the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under the National Curriculum Science Order. (Learning and skills Act 2000)

St. James' holds the Healthy Schools Award and adheres to the criteria of this national award, which includes aspects of sexual health and well-being.

Human Dignity and Homosexuality

At St. James' we teach pupils that we are all unique and created in God's image. Pope Francis reaffirms.. ' that every person, regardless of sexual orientation, ought to be respected in his or her dignity and treated with consideration, while 'every sign of unjust discrimination' is to be carefully avoided, particularly any form of aggression or violence. Such families should be given respectful pastoral guidance, so that those who manifest a homosexual orientation can receive the assistance they need to understand and fully carry out God's will in their lives.' (Pope Francis: Amoris Laetitia Par. 250 -2016)

' The Church teaches that homosexual people must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2358) In addition...it must be quite clear that homosexual orientation must never be considered sinful or evil in itself.' (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales: Cherishing Life par 111, 204)

At St. James', we make children aware that there are many different types of loving relationships. We discuss homosexuality and transgender characteristics in an age-appropriate way with Y5 pupils. We seek out resources for younger children that show same sex relationships, wherever possible. This does not in any way detract from the sanctity of marriage between heterosexual partners but

ensures that our pupils respect all of the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act of 2010 and also act in accordance with teachings of the Catholic Church.

The protected characteristics are:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Other related policies:

- Anti- Bullying
- Safeguarding Policy and Prevent
- Prevent leaflet
- PSHE

Updated: Spring 2017

To be reviewed: Spring 2019