



# St Thomas More Catholic First School

*Learning, loving and living together with Christ*

## RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

### SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

'Living together as Jesus taught us we promote personal, spiritual and social development of all through prayer and activities in such a way that we might live life to the full and become fully alive in God. We encourage each other to be contributing members of the school and parish community understanding and valuing the world in which we live'.

### AIM OF RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION (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. Furthermore, our school aims that we will endeavour to raise children's self-esteem and personal responsibility, 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"<sup>1</sup> which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

<sup>1</sup> Gravissimum Educationis

### Objectives

To develop with our children the following attitudes and virtues:

- 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;
- celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love;
- recognising the importance of marriage and family life.

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.

To know and understand:

- the Church's teaching on marriage and the importance of marriage and family life;

### DEFINING RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION

The Department for Education (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>2</sup>.

It is about the development of the child's knowledge and understanding of her or him as a sexual being, about what it means to be fully human, called to live in right relationships with self and others and being enabled to make moral decisions in conscience.

The DfE identifies three main elements: "attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding"<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfEE, 2000

<sup>3</sup> ibid

## **RATIONALE**

'I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL' (John 10.10)

We are involved in relationships and sex education because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. 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 of Christian ideals. 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, will be placed firmly within the context of relationship 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 children. 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.

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 children have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from and support will be provided to help children deal with differing sets of values.

## **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, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

## **OUTCOMES**

### **INCLUSION AND DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING**

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual children in respect to children's 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 children 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**

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 children, 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.

## **BROAD CONTENT OF RSE**

St Thomas More Catholic First School follows a developmental programme for children in primary years entitled 'A Journey in Love'. This programme has as its foundational premise the belief that we are made in the image and likeness of God and, as a consequence, gender and sexuality are God's gift, reflect God's beauty and share

in the divine creativity. In order that children may grow and develop healthily and holistically towards an understanding of their gender and its implications for successful relationships, they must be at ease with themselves and grow in self-knowledge.

“An aspect of the mystery of love is treated in each year group; children and young people are encouraged to marvel at the wonder and beauty of God’s creative love. This is reflected in each stage of a person’s growth in the Primary years through a series of suggested, progressive and developmental tasks, activities and reflections which focus on physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development.”

(Sr Jude Groden RSM Primary RE Adviser)

### **LEARNING STYLES**

RSE will be taught following advice from the Birmingham Archdiocese. It will focus on the teaching of the ‘Good News’, in the contexts of Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship, ‘A Journey in Love’ and the science curriculum. We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE, which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science.

Teaching methods will be adapted to meet the varying needs of children.

### **YEAR GROUP LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

**Reception** Children know and understand that God has made them unique and that although we are all different we are all special to him.

**Year 1** Children know and understand that they are growing and developing as members of their own family and God’s family.

**Year 2** Children know and understand that they are growing and developing in a God-given community.

**Year 3** Children know and understand the virtues essential to friendship, e.g. loyalty, responsibility and experience the importance both of forgiving and being forgiven and of celebrating God’s forgiveness.

**Year 4** Children know and understand that they are all different and celebrate these differences as they appreciate that God’s love accepts us as we are and as we change.

We encourage other valued members of the community to work with us to provide advice and support to the children with regard to health education. In particular, members of Local Health Organisations, such as the school nurse and other health professionals, give us valuable support with health programme. Other people that we may call on include local clergy and Child Line. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher led sessions.

### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHING THE PROGRAMME**

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lies with the leaders of RE, PSHE and science. However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspects of the RSE programme. They will be role models for children of good, healthy, wholesome relationships between staff, other adults and children. They will also be contributing to the development of children’s personal and social skills.

### **PARENTS AND CARERS**

We recognise that parents/carers are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we provide the principle means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children. The school 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. Parent/carers will be informed when the more sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about children’s learning.

Parents/carers can view the policy and view the resources used in ‘A Journey in Love’ work on the website and can contact the Head Teacher if there are any concerns.

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.

## **OTHER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING RSE**

### **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, e.g., SEND, safeguarding, 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 Education Service, the Local Authority and other 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 member of staff with responsibility for child protection.)*

## **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 children, 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, e.g., where a child or young person's questions hints at abuse or is of a personal nature.

## **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 children 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.

## **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 children's work at regular intervals. The programme will be evaluated biannually by means of monitoring planning, works and lessons given to children and / or by discussion with children, staff and parents. The results of the evaluation will 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.

Adopted by the Governing Body on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed – Chair of Governors \_\_\_\_\_

Signed – Head Teacher \_\_\_\_\_