

## Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

*"I have come that you might have life, and have it to the full" (John, 10:10)*

### **Introduction**

At St Joseph's we recognise the Church's teaching that parents are the first educators of their children and this is at the heart of our Catholic RSHE programme. We recognise our role in supporting and complimenting parents to enable their children to grow to responsible adulthood in the knowledge and love of God and neighbour.

In designing this policy, and our RSHE Programme of study we are committed to working alongside our parents making sure that decisions are made together. We are delighted to be using Ten:Ten resources 'Life to the Full' programme, a Catholic Education Service approved programme that we have adapted to meet the needs of our pupils.

In partnership with Ten Ten resources, and following statutory guidance and advice from the Department for Education, the staff and governors through the Lead of the RSE Subject Leader have formulated this school policy for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE).

### **Defining RSHE**

In line with the DfE September 2020 update, in primary schools it is now compulsory to teach Relationships and Health Education. After consultation with parents, we feel that it is important for our KS2 students to begin to learn some aspects of Sex Education appropriate to their age and stage of development.

The DfE guidance states that "children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way". We believe RSHE needs to be addressed because "teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children" is extremely important. Our programme of study includes the topics of families and the people of who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, looking after our bodies, online relationships and being safe. We believe that the development of the pupils' knowledge in these areas allows them to become empowered and able to make moral decisions in conscience as they prepare for adult life.

### **Aims and Objectives**

We are called to be charitable, non-judgemental, kind and respectful, and to teach our pupils to be the same. As staff we are committed to demonstrating trust and warmth and if we talk coherently and consistently about each person being a unique creation of God, this becomes a distinctive part of the curriculum.

This policy, along with our school mission statement commits us to the education of the **whole child** (social, moral, spiritual) and we believe that RSHE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, our school aims state that 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. It is in this context that we commit ourselves to the following.

*To develop 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 conflict positively, recognising the value of difference;
- 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 and the nature and meaning of love;
- 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, and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation;

After consultation with parents, we have developed a rolling programme of study from Years 1-6 that will ensure that children are being taught appropriate material relevant to their age and stage in life. 'Life to the Full' is a comprehensive platform of creative resources that will engage, inform and inspire our children which includes interactive video content, story-based activities, employing a wide range of teaching tools, original worship music and an accompanying programme of classroom prayers. As RSHE is now a statutory curriculum area, we will assess pupils on these areas half termly in line with our Marking and Feedback policy. This will be monitored termly by the RSHE co-ordinator in school as well as the Head Teacher.

## **Answering sensitive questions**

It is our whole school aim to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSHE 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.

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSHE. 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. We believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSHE 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, e.g., where a child or young person's questions hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature. Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in the programme.

Teachers will be aware of the needs of their pupils and not let any fears and worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects that a child 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.

## **Equal opportunities**

At St Joseph's school, relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves, are marked by honesty, warmth, trust and security. We aim to promote a school wide message of compassion and respect for all people through the teaching of RSHE and all other related subjects. Under the 2010 Equality Act all protected characteristics will be recognised and acceptance taught as an embedded aspect in all we do including: disability; gender; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

Through the teachings of our Catholic faith we believe that each person is special and unique in the eyes of God and it should be so in our eyes also. Every member of staff in St. Joseph's school is committed therefore to developing and fostering a positive self-image in every child from the day they enter St. Joseph's school. We value the diversity of ethnic backgrounds, cultures and experiences which our children and their families bring to our school and will endeavour to reflect these wherever possible.

## **Working with parents**

Following an online consultation with parents in the autumn term 2020, the RSHE co-ordinator has restructured our programme of study to best suit the communities beliefs and views around the key decisions. From this the main conclusions were that;

- We believe there is a need to use biologically correct names for body parts across school.

- Pornography should only be discussed in KS2 as part of a wider understanding of internet safety.
- Sexual intimacy will be offered as part of an optional session with resources given to parents who wish to have this discussion at home.
- Discussions in school around puberty should be taught in KS2 as an integral part of curriculum to best prepare our children.

Parents/carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSHE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning. All parents/carers will be able to access the 'Life to the Full' resources online using the parent portal log in (details available from school office).

### **Right to withdraw**

Parents continue to have the right to withdraw their children from Sex Education except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. St Joseph's will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning. We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.

If after reading this policy and accessing the Life to the Full parent portal, you still wish to withdraw your child, please notify the school by contacting the Head Teacher using the admin email address.

### **Review/responsibilities**

We have identified pupils' different starting points by reviewing previous RSE policies and completing an audit of our previous PSHE curriculum information. We have also reviewed the input of parents with the help of an online training video, a letter outlining the content of our programme of study and finally an in depth survey about the key decisions moving forward. This will continue to be reviewed based on teachers' knowledge of each cohort of children and their personal needs. The RSHE Lead is responsible for the updating of this policy and it will be reviewed in September 2022.