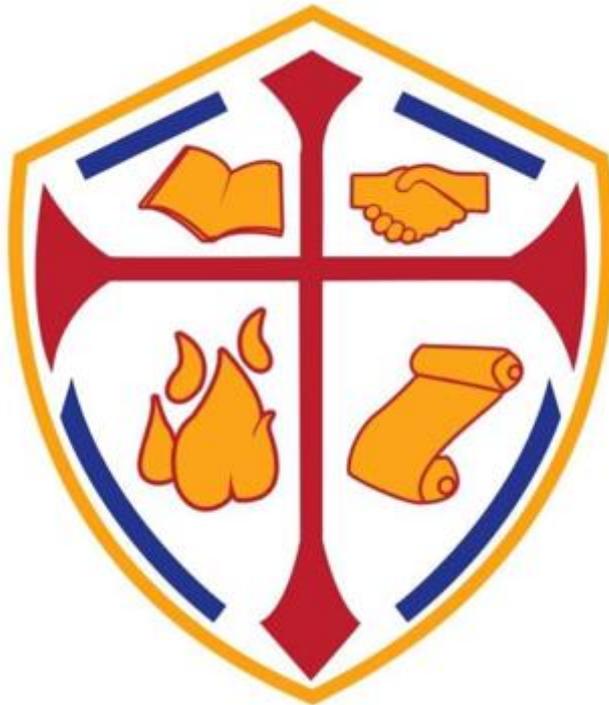




# Relationships and Sex Policy

## All Saints Catholic School



“We are all one in Christ, our mission and our responsibility is to recognize all individuals in our community as part of the body of Christ and to value them accordingly in our treatment of them, thriving and progressing in a spirit of togetherness”  
(1 Cor. 12:29)

**Approved by  
Chair of  
Governor:**

**Date:**

**Last reviewed on:** September 2021

**Next review due  
by:** September 2022



# RSE RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY (including HIV & Aids)

(Guided by *A Model Policy for Relationships and Sex Education*, CES, 2017  
& Diocese of Brentwood)

“We are all one in Christ, our mission and our responsibility is to recognize all individuals in our community as part of the body of Christ and to value them accordingly in our treatment of them, thriving and progressing in a spirit of togetherness”  
(1 Cor. 12:29)

## Implementation and Review of Policy

Implementation of the policy will take place after consultation with the Governors in the Summer Term 2018. This policy will be reviewed every year by the Head teacher, RSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and appropriate staff, including the Head of Religious Education. The next review date is July 2019.

## Defining Relationship and Sex Education

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>1</sup>. It is about the development of the pupil’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>2</sup>.

## Statutory Curriculum Requirements

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. (There is also a separate requirement for maintained secondary schools to teach about HIV, AIDS and sexually transmitted infections).

## Rationale

*‘I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL’ (Jn.10.10)*

We are involved in relationships and sex education precisely 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfEE, 2000

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*



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 is firmly embedded in the PSHE teaching 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.

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. Those who deliver RSE in our Catholic school must make themselves aware of the Roman Catholic Church's teaching regarding sexual matters.

In all areas of human experience, a good base of knowledge and understanding is deemed necessary for informed opinions and decisions to be made – human sexuality is no exception. It is vital that pupils receive effective sex education to prevent putting themselves at risk and to correct misinformation, which may affect their relationships with others.

This policy has been developed to ensure the inclusion of all students and staff with due regard to SEN, Gifted & Talented, gender, chosen sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, Looked After Children, and those students who are subject to a Child Protection Plan. This policy also ensures that due regard is given to staff in respect of their maternity / paternity entitlement. All Saints School values the worth of every individual and the contribution they make to the school community as a whole.

## 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, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

## Aim of RSE and the Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement commits us to strive to recognise, and promote the recognition of the value of individuals in the way in which they are treated. We believe that RSE is an integral part of this mission. We wish our pupils to thrive and progress and seek to raise their self-esteem, help them to grow in knowledge and understanding, and develop caring and sensitive attitudes. We therefore intend to provide children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education"<sup>3</sup> which is compatible with their physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual development<sup>4</sup>, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

## Purposes and objectives

Our purposes in pursuing a programme of Relationship and Sex Education are

- To provide a broad and balanced RSE programme which offers entitlement for all, and which operates in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.
- To endow pupils with positive pro-active attitudes, patterns of behaviour, lifestyles, values, and communication and decision-making skills with respect to sexuality and personal relationships.

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<sup>3</sup> Gravissimum Educationis 1

<sup>4</sup> *A Journey in Love*, Sr Jude Groden and associates, 2006



- To foster self-esteem, self-awareness and a sense of moral responsibility.
- To provide appropriate knowledge and understanding relating to the physical, emotional and social aspects of an individual's development as a particular gender / male or female; personal relationships, responsible attitudes and appropriate behaviour; and family life – the value and importance of the family as a social institution and its contribution to the development of attachment, love and concern in caring for others.
- To communicate the correct terminology relevant to drugs and HIV education and information on how the HIV virus is transmitted through body fluids and how it is not transmitted.
- To promote the safety and safeguarding of the individual in different environments, e.g. at home, at school, at work and during leisure activities.
- To clarify the Roman Catholic Church's teaching in relation to sexual matters and sexual life in light of Gospel Values and in a climate of respect for all individuals.

Our objectives in pursuing a programme of Relationship and Sex Education with these purposes are

*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 their own bodily natures;
- 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 as well as 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, and how to love chastely;
- assessing risks and managing behaviour in order to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity and dignity.

*To foster **knowledge and understanding of**:*

- the Church's teaching on relationships and the nature and meaning of sexual 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, psychological and emotional changes that accompany puberty;
- the facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation;
- how to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception;
- how to keep oneself safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

## 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

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 pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, pregnancy, maternity, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children.

## Broad Content of Relationships and Sex Education

Three aspects of RSE - attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills will be provided in three inter-related ways: the whole school / ethos dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific relationships and sex curriculum.

Our programme, informed by the structure and content of previous recommended programmes (E.g. A *Journey in Love*) and the Edexcel GCSE syllabus, will cover

### Year 7 : God calls us to love ourselves

#### SRE DAY: 'The Facts of Life' – TenTen Theatre Group

<i>Physical development :</i>	Puberty and Personal hygiene
<i>Emotional and social development :</i>	Social and emotional changes in puberty
<i>Intellectual development :</i>	Emotional intelligence, gender differences, loving self
<i>Spiritual development :</i>	Uniqueness

### Year 8 : God calls us to love and respect others

#### SRE DAY: 'The Facts of Life' – TenTen Theatre Group

<i>Physical development :</i>	Showing love for others; knowing you are loved; Circle of Love and Life
<i>Social development :</i>	Loving self; self-love and selfishness; dignity of the individual
<i>Emotional development :</i>	Feelings of rejection; ending relationships with respect
<i>Intellectual development :</i>	The meaning of love; loving behaviour
<i>Spiritual development :</i>	Love and service

### Year 9 : God calls us to love and respect others

#### SRE DAY: 'Love, Honour, Cherish' – TenTen Theatre Group

<i>Physical development :</i>	Body language; the importance of touch
<i>Social development :</i>	Types of relationships; different natures of relationships; marriage
<i>Emotional and Intellectual development :</i>	Loving / being in love / married love; stages in a loving relationship



<i>Spiritual development :</i>	Where love is present, God is present
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**Year 10 and 11 : God calls us too love and respect in responsible loving relationships**  
**SRE DAY: ‘Babies’ – TenTen Theatre Group**

<b>1. Marriage and Family Life</b>	
<i>Spiritual development :</i>	Scriptural basis for teaching on marriage and the family; marriage as the rock on which family and society are built
<i>Physical and intellectual development :</i>	The enriching experience of love in marriage
<i>Emotional and social development :</i>	A happy marriage; each marriage is unique
<b>2. Family life</b>	
<i>Spiritual development :</i>	How family life enhances the dignity of the individual
<i>Physical and intellectual development :</i>	Physical and intellectual dimensions of a family
<i>Emotional and social development :</i>	Agony and ecstasy of family life; forming persons in love for the benefit of society
<b>3. Contraception and STIs</b>	
<i>Spiritual development :</i>	Humans as the temple of God’s spirit
<i>Spiritual development :</i>	Value and dignity of HIV/AIDS sufferers
<i>Physical and intellectual development :</i>	Methods of contraception and Church guidance
<i>Emotional and social development :</i>	Emotional and social dimensions of using contraception
<b>4. Abortion</b>	
<i>Spiritual development :</i>	Scripture and Church teaching on dignity of each individual
<i>Physical and intellectual development :</i>	Abortion and foetal development; sanctity of life; life begins at conception
<i>Emotional and social development :</i>	Emotional and social turmoil before and after abortion
<b>5. Divorce and Annulment</b>	
<i>Spiritual development :</i>	Church teaching on divorce
<i>Physical and intellectual development :</i>	Physical and material effects of divorce on the family; marriage as a lifelong covenant
<i>Emotional and social development :</i>	Dimensions of divorce; emotional and social turmoil

**Year 12 and 13 : God calls us to live in responsible loving relationships**

<i>Spiritual development :</i>	Scriptural basis and Church teaching on living in loving and responsible relationships
<i>Physical and intellectual development :</i>	Different ways God can call us to love; human vocation to love; life situations both temporary and permanent
<i>Emotional and social development :</i>	Social and emotional facets of responsible loving relationships

**Guidelines for delivery of RSE at All Saints**

1. The Science department deals only with the biological aspects of human sexual behaviour in timetabled lessons. The themes of parenting, relationships and the ethical and moral considerations of RSE are restricted to timetabled P.S.H.E. and Religious Education lessons because of the nature of our school community. The information students are given must stress the teaching and doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church at all times alongside other views and teachings of those of other faiths and none as well as UK Legal positions. All staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and



values aspect of the RSE programme. They will be role models for pupils of good, healthy, wholesome relationships as between staff, other adults and pupils. They will also be contributing to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.

2. The RSE programme is spiral in its approach, which will ensure continuity and progression throughout the Key Stages. This ensures that key concepts are revisited several times throughout the programme. From September 2008 the students have followed the 'A Journey in Love' programme designed specifically for use in Catholic schools across the Diocese of Brentwood.
3. The most recent advice used in the compilation of this policy has been the CES' *Good practice in developing a school RSE policy (2017)* and *A model policy for Relationships and Sex Education (2017)*. The approach at All Saints has been informed by the CES working party on RSE led by Bishop Sherrington and Baroness Hollins.
4. Any materials intended for use in P.S.H.E. and R. E. lessons should be checked with the head of the pastoral curriculum, **Mrs Thompson**, to ensure suitability in light of our school's Catholic nature. RSE will be assessed in line with the assessment procedures implemented as part of the PSHE programme.
5. The teacher with responsibility for the pastoral curriculum will provide INSET, advice, guidance and support to tutor teams or individuals concerning the delivery of sex education. All programmes will be evaluated and monitored regularly using information feedback from teaching staff and pupils to inform future planning.
6. The School's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters and issues, **not** for teachers to offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour and contraception.

**Teachers cannot:**

- **give personal advice or counselling on sexual matters (including contraception) to a pupil (either individually or within a group) if a parent has withdrawn that pupil from RSE.**
- **give personal contraceptive advice to pupils under 16, for whom sexual intercourse is illegal, without parental consent.**

**Teachers can:**

- provide pupils with education and information about where and from whom they can receive confidential sexual advice and treatment, e.g. school nurse, their G.P., or Brook Advisory Centre. This is not the provision of sex education, but merely the imparting of information as to where advice, counselling and treatment can lawfully be obtained.

Confidentiality

The issue of staff/pupil confidentiality is of importance. Where a pupil is considered at risk from any type of abuse, whether emotional, physical or sexual, or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this matter immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in compliance with the school procedures for Child Protection and Safeguarding. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow the procedures as outlined in the Child Protection Policy.

- **Teachers must not promise confidentiality.**
- Pupils must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the Head Teacher and possibly parents.
- Teachers must use their professional judgement to decide whether confidence can be maintained having heard the information.
- Teachers must indicate clearly to pupils when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential – the pupil can then decide whether to proceed or not.

Those involved in educating and caring for HIV + children should be sensitive to their need for confidentiality and their right to privacy. Both parents and the child may need support as may the



teachers and others involved in the direct care of the child at school. The number of people who are aware that a child is infected is, therefore, confined on a “need to know” basis. Although most HIV + children show no symptoms of infection, if the measures outlined in this policy are put into practice then the “need to know” is largely eliminated.

Staff must ensure that they follow the correct procedures relating to ‘First Aid’ procedures. Pupils if and when possible should be sent to the school office, where a trained first-aider will deal with pupils according to the appropriate safety precautions.

### **Withdrawal from RSE**

**All parents will be sent a letter annually informing them that at various stages and in certain subjects, aspects of sex education will be covered in that academic year. The letter will also inform parents of their right to withdraw their child from Relationship and Sex education lessons.** Parents do not have to give reasons for withdrawal, but we respectfully invite them to do so, so that they are aware of the nature and content of the full programme, which can often resolve misunderstandings. Once a parent’s request to withdraw is made, that request must be complied with until revoked by the parent.

### **Use of Visitors**

We believe that most of the Relationships and Sex Education Programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the pupils. However, visitors such as nurses, outside agencies, family planning or sexual health workers can greatly enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of a planned programme for sex education. After gaining approval for the visit from the Head Teacher, the organiser must make the visitor aware of the Roman Catholic ethos of All Saints School to ensure that the degree of explicitness of the contact and presentation are acceptable. The protocols of the visitor’s policy must be adhered to.

## **Parents and Carers**

We recognise that parents (and other carers who stand in their place) 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 annually by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children’s learning.

Parents will be consulted before this policy is ratified by the governors; they will be invited to comment on policy and query anything upon which they are unclear. This policy, when ratified, will be made accessible to parents via the school website. Our aim is that every parent and carer will have full confidence in the school’s RSE programme to meet their child’s needs.

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. Parents will be reminded annually in a letter of their right to withdraw their child. The school 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.

## **Balanced Curriculum**

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



## Other Roles and Responsibilities Regarding RSE

### Governors

- Have the RSE policy drawn up 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,
- 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 PSHEE and RE.

#### **The Head Teacher: Ms Cantle**

- Takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, the Diocesan Education Service and the Local Education Authority and appropriate agencies.

#### **The PSHEE / RSE Co-ordinator: Mrs Thompson**

- Has with the Head Teacher 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

#### **All Staff**

- 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. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSE. All staff should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them.

## Children's Questions

The school wishes to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place, where 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. 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 pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion.<sup>5</sup>

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.

## Supporting Children and Young People 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 Safeguarding Lead.



## Confidentiality and Advice

All governors, all teachers, all support staff, all parents and all pupils must be made aware of this policy, particularly as it relates to issues of advice and confidentiality.

All lessons, especially those in the RSE programme, will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and sex, developing appropriate personal and social skills and becoming appreciative of the values and attitudes which underpin the Christian understanding of what it means to be fully human.

Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in the

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<sup>5</sup> (See also Sex and Relationship Guidance, 4.5 'Dealing with questions' 0116/2000, Department for Education and Employment, July 2000 for more detail) programme. Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties, in line with the school's pastoral care policy. Teachers should explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance. 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

## Review and Monitoring of the Policy

The RSE Policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Head of Religious Education and the PSHEE Coordinator in consultation with Diocesan representatives, members of the Governing Body, parents and students.

## Access to the Policy

All parents/carers are made aware of the policy and it is made available to them on the school website via the Parent portal. Hard copies of all the policies are available to parents on request.

## Conclusion

This policy reaffirms the central principles of the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on sexuality and other aspects of sex education, whilst empowering students to play a responsible role in their personal relationships within the society of the twenty-first century.



## Appendix 1

(Reviewed June 2017 based on *Relationship and Sex Education : Diocese of Brentwood and Catholic Education Service* compiled by Sr Jude Groden, RSM (December 2016))

# STAFF GUIDANCE DOCUMENT ON THE CATHOLIC TEACHING ON ASPECTS OF SEX EDUCATION

In a Catholic School it is the responsibility of all the staff to acquaint themselves with Catholic Teaching on moral issues. In the light of such issues becoming more prominent in many areas of the school curriculum, it was felt that staff would welcome the following guidelines on the Catholic teaching on some aspects of Personal Relationships.

The area of Personal Relationships is a delicate one for both pupil and teacher and staff should feel free to discuss and share approaches to classroom practice, this sharing of approaches will highlight the complex nature of Sex Education. The document 'Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of the Catholic School' supports this:

Proper regard should be given to the process of moral development of young people, so that they are not simply informed of the Church's teaching but also helped to develop an appreciation of the values embraced in that teaching. This means taking account of the world in which our children and young people are growing up.

### **Love one another as I have loved you. (John 13.34)**

All the teaching of the Catholic Church on moral questions begins from the understanding that God made everyone. God loves everyone and it is God's will that everyone should 'love' and respect others. Love and selfishness are opposites. Inevitably, there will be repetition in particular parts of the teaching. This school has a clear policy on Relationships and Sex Education. This appendix provides guidance on issues which might require clarification.

### **Sex Outside Marriage**

The Catholic Church teaches that sex is a gift from God to enable two people to express their exclusive love for each other and to help continue God's work of creation. Thus sexual intercourse should only take place within the firm commitment of marriage. In the Pupils' FAQ compiled with answers by Sr Jude, it is perhaps helpful to consider the following : **Q.** "My parents were not married when I was born, was that wrong?" **Q.** "My parents are not married now, is that wrong?" **A.** "*We need to teach that the best care of children is within marriage. We do not, however, level judgement with regard to children's present or former positions.*"

### **Divorce**

Based on the Gospel teaching of Jesus 'What God has joined together let no man put asunder' the Church does not recognise the breaking of the contract of a valid marriage. The Church will however, examine a 'marriage' and if any of the ingredients of the marriage are missing – at the time of the marriage ceremony, the Church may declare that 'no marriage took place' and an annulment can be granted. In the Pupils' FAQ compiled with answers by Sr. Jude, it is perhaps helpful to consider the following : **Q.** "My parents are divorced, why is divorce wrong?" **A.** "*Divorce is not wrong but unfortunate.*"

### **Contraception**

Our relationships with other people are expressed by our words and actions. The most intimate of these actions, sexual intercourse, expresses the most intimate relationship, which is the love between husband and wife. The act of sexual intercourse is also the action through which the human race is continued. Therefore, any sexual acts where the creation of new life has been deliberately ruled out – including the use of artificial contraceptives – must be regarded as a wrong use of sex. The fullest statement on the subject is found in the



Encyclical Letter 'Humane Vitae', issued by Pope Paul VI in 1968. The Church's teaching can be accessed in the Catechism (#2368)

## Abortion

The Church's teaching on abortion is quite clear. God created us all in his image and human life is sacred. The question of when this begins has been the cause of debate. The Church states that life begins at conception. The strength of this arrangement lies in the fact that there is no other point in personal development of which we can say 'Human life has now come into being – before this point it did not exist'.

N.B. This principle of the sacredness of human life from the moment of conception is one which the Church would apply to moral debates concerning embryology in general and genetic research in particular.

## Masturbation

The Church teaches that masturbation is wrong in that it can be seen as a form of self – indulgence. This is not what the act of sex is intended to be. God, the Creator, designed it as the special means by which man and a woman can give themselves to one another. Masturbation encourages us to live in a fantasy world rather than to find fulfilment through working hard at a relationship in the real world. It can teach us to regard others as sex objects, rather than people in their own right.

## Homosexuality

We need, first to distinguish between homosexuality as a way of life/identity and homosexuality as a practice/sexual act. The Catholic Church accepts that, generally speaking, homosexuality is not a matter of choice.

However, while all human beings are called to love, the Church does not believe that sexual activity is necessary to the expression of this love; *witness the value it attaches to celibacy and the vow of virginity*. In fact, the church teaches that the full sexual expression of love is reserved for husband and wife in marriage and that this sexual expression of love must be open to the possibility of new life.

Hence, the Catholic Church does not accept homosexuality in practice/the act of homosexual sex. It does not believe that sexual acts between persons of the same sex are morally right in principle. The Church bases this teaching on Biblical theology and on its Philosophy of Natural Law. ***However, the Church is aware of the special problems of homosexuals in the world and would stress in this regard the love of Jesus for all. We are all created by God and the possibility of repentance and forgiveness for sexual sins is open to all.***

## Same-sex marriage

*"In nearly all cultures and in all times marriage has been understood as a total union bodily, emotionally and spiritually between man and woman. Of its nature it is sexual because sex is the only way out body can form a complete union with another. Only a man and a woman can enter into this total union of marriage because each one's body complements the other inn sexual intercourse.*

*Sexual intercourse produces the single biological good in pregnancy and birth. This is the beginning of a family and protects the children by introducing them into a committed and stable relationship.*

*People of the same sex cannot fulfil this kind of relationship and so, therefore, in the Church's eyes, their relationship cannot be regarded as a marriage.*

*Long standing and stable relationships between people of the same gender is a "close friendship" because there is no complementarity. At the heart of marriage is the necessary sexual expression which should be naturally procreative. Therefore, same sex relationships cannot be regarded as marriage.*

We can say "yes" to Civil Partnership. *The argument for Same Sex Marriage is based on equality and non-discrimination but that is not the issue for the Church. The comparison between the use of Marriage for both relationships does not respect the necessary difference between Man and woman and Same Sex."* (RSE : Diocese of Brentwood and CES compiled by Sr Jude Groden RSM, December 2016)



## AIDS

The approach of the Catholic Church towards AIDS can be viewed from the point of view of:-

1. The Victim
2. The underlying causes.
  - 1 (i) Once a person suffers, from whatever cause, the victim is to be treated with the fullness of Christian love and care.
  - (ii) Great care must be taken to avoid a homophobic mentality.
  - 2 (i) Clearly the Catholic Church supports the view that loyalty to one partner is the best defence against the spread of AIDS.
  - (ii) Since the Catholic view is that the full sexual expression of human love is reserved for husband and wife within marriage, it cannot support any measures, which tacitly accept, even if they do not encourage, sexual activity outside marriage.... *'Nor can we accept that for the unmarried the choices lie between condoms and infection. There is a third course of action: refusal to engage in extra marital sexual activity'* – Cardinal Hume

## Trans-Gender issues

Regarding Church teaching on trans-gender issues, *"the advice given and always taken by schools involved [within the Diocese of Brentwood] has been to act with **compassion and understanding**, and allow the individual to be reintegrated into the school community with a gender that he./she feels most natural. This can only happen after sensitive preparation of the school community."* (RSE : Diocese of Brentwood and CES compiled by Sr Jude Groden RSM, December 2016)

## Conscience

The Church teaches that Man must obey his conscience is his most direct connection with moral commandments. There is the serious obligation of informing one's conscience for only a properly instructed conscience can be a reliable guide and can claim ultimate freedom of decision. We must learn to make decisions on Christian wisdom and authority, but decisions which are our own and for which we are prepared to take responsibility in the sight of God.