



# *St Mary's CE Primary School*

## *'Nurturing Success'*



### **Relationships and Sex Education Policy**

#### **Introduction**

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is an essential part of the curriculum when preparing children for their lives now, as they develop and mature, and for the future as adults and parents. The school aims to create an environment in which children are able to learn and understand the values, standards and responsibilities of the individual within society, and develop an appreciation of the relationships which underpin daily life. RSE forms part of the overall policy on Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship and draws on elements of science taught through the National Curriculum (2000) and on Religious Education.

#### **What does RSE mean?**

In the *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education* Guidance document (2020), RSE is defined in the following way:

“Today’s children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, 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.”

*(Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education DFE 2020)*

#### **Aims and Objectives**

At St Mary’s, we aim to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, emotional, mental and physical development of pupils and to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Through the RSE programme, the specific aims are:

- to promote children’s moral development;
- to develop caring, sensitive and responsible attitudes to others and society as a whole;
- to increase children’s respect and understanding of their own and other people’s bodies;
- to develop responsibility in relationships and foster tolerance and awareness of the different aspects of relationships;
- to help children to become aware of their own emotions and to manage them appropriately and effectively;
- to develop a clear understanding of the human body and the changes which take place from birth to maturity;
- to help children to understand human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;
- to help children to understand the importance of stable and loving relationships and the value of family life for the nurture of children;
- to help children to manage conflict and to learn how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

## **Relationships and Sex Education at St Mary's CE Primary School**

Teachers have a professional duty to ensure that RSE is taught within the agreed values framework of the school and that their own values do not influence the teaching of RSE. However, the ethos of St Mary's CE Primary School is distinctively Christian and this ethos will provide the context within which all personal development takes place. This means that Christian attitudes and values will underpin the need to develop a child's self-esteem, self-awareness and sense of moral responsibility and will permeate the whole curriculum.

### **Who is responsible for teaching RSE?**

At St Mary's all staff bear a shared responsibility for teaching RSE since, by definition, teaching opportunities could arise at any time, for example at playtimes. However, focused RSE sessions are led by class teachers as part of the PSHE and science curriculum. In Year 5, the school nurse covers what happens during puberty and how the children's bodies change. Everything the school nurse teaches is included in the Science National Curriculum for Year 5. In Year 6, the school nurse helps the children to develop their understanding of how to manage changes which happen during puberty. The children are also shown a 'Busy Bodies' film which explains how babies are made and are given the opportunity to ask questions about this. Parents are informed of this prior to it taking place and given the option to watch the film, to ask any further questions and to withdraw their child from the aspect which relates to how babies are made.

### **The Relationships and Sex Education Programme at St Mary's**

At St Mary's, the teaching of RSE is an integral part of the PSHE and Citizenship curriculum within a healthy schools context. It is also taught partly through science and elements of it form part of the Religious Education Curriculum.

The National Curriculum (2020) is underpinned by a stated belief that education is a route to spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development and therefore, a route to the wellbeing of the individual. The RSE elements of the National Curriculum Science Orders are mandatory across all key stages.

The RSE programme at St Mary's is tailored to the age and physical and emotional maturity of the children and develops confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships. The children learn to name the parts of the body and how their bodies work and ultimately they are prepared for the onset of puberty. The programme also ensures that children are able to protect themselves and ask for help and support.

Within the programme for RSE at St Mary's and in line with guidance from the DCFS for primary aged children, three main elements are covered:

- attitudes and values
  - recognising basic feelings of being happy, sad, frightened and angry;
  - being able to make friends and talk with them, sharing thoughts and feelings;
  - learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations;
  - learning the value of family life, marriage, and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children;
  - learning the value of respect, love and care;
  - exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas;
  - developing critical thinking as part of decision-making.
  
- personal and social skills

- learning to manage emotions and relationships with confidence and sensitivity;
  - developing self-respect and empathy for others;
  - learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice;
  - developing an appreciation of the consequences when choices are made;
  - managing conflict;
  - learning to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse, and use simple safety rules.
- knowledge and understanding
    - learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages;
    - understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;

At primary school level sex and relationship education should contribute to the foundation of PSHE and Citizenship by ensuring that all children:

- develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships;
- are able to name parts of the body and describe how their bodies work;
- can protect themselves and ask for help and support; and are prepared for puberty.

At St. Mary's C.E. Primary School, our PSHE curriculum has been planned around the findings of the CHIMAT report for our Authority to ensure that we have a personalised program that addresses the needs of our children. The programme we have developed incorporates relationships and sex education. The PSHE Association provide guidance and support for planning our curriculum. Statutory guidance is followed in respect to relationships and sex education (RSE).

#### **How does RSE link with the science curriculum?**

RSE links closely with the following areas of the science curriculum:

##### **Key Stage 1 (Years 1& 2)**

- knowing that babies and pets have needs;
- understanding that humans and animals can produce offspring and that these grow into adults;
- recognising the similarities and differences between themselves and others;
- recognising and naming the external parts of the human body;

##### **Key Stage 2 (Years 3,4,5 &6)**

- understanding the life processes common to humans and other animals;
- knowing the main stages of the human life cycle;
- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages, including understanding the physical and emotional changes that take place during puberty, why they happen and how to manage the process;
- learning and understanding the facts about the processes pregnancy and birth;
- knowing that safe routines can lessen the spread of viruses including HIV.

#### **How does RSE link with the Religious Education curriculum?**

Children are taught Religious Education from the East Riding of Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus for RE. RSE links underpin many units of work across both key stages.

#### **How is RSE taught at St Mary's?**

As for any other subject area at St Mary's, teaching strategies are varied and chosen to meet the particular needs of the children, based on formative assessment.

Children are taught RSE in their mixed ability class groups. If necessary, activities will be adapted to meet individual needs. Children in Years 5 and 6 will have an opportunity to be taught in single gender groups however, it is important that both boys and girls understand the changes that occur to the developing bodies of both sex and therefore the content of what is taught will be broadly similar.

Outside agencies will be involved when additional professional or specialist support is considered to be of benefit to the children's understanding of particular topics. This is usually the school nurse who works with children in Years 5 and 6 during the summer term. Parents are informed of this before the nurse visits.

Further practical strategies for teaching RSE are found in Appendix 1.

### **Equalities/Inclusion**

"Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education must be accessible for all pupils. This is particularly important when planning teaching for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility. Schools should also be mindful of the preparing for adulthood outcomes as set out in the SEND code of practice, when teaching these subjects to those with SEND."

*(Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education DFE 2020)*

St Mary's is an inclusive school. All learners will be included in RSE with teaching tailored to meet their individual needs. Advice from the Special Educational needs Coordinator will be sought if required and further support may be provided from outside agencies.

The school recognizes that some parents and carers of children with special educational needs may find it difficult to accept their children's developing sexuality and that some pupils will be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation than their peers, and others may be confused about what is acceptable public behaviour. The school will provide support for these children so that they are able to develop skills to reduce the risks of being abused and exploited, and to learn what sorts of behaviour are, and are not, acceptable.

### **The role of parents in RSE**

Parents are the key people in:

- teaching their children about sex and relationships;
- maintaining the culture and ethos of the family;
- helping their children cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up;
- preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities that sexual maturity brings.

St Mary's sex and relationship education programme will complement and support these parental roles and parents have been actively involved in the determination of the school's policy. St Mary's operates an 'open door' policy and parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns or questions they may have about the school's RSE programme at any time.

Parents are invited to view the 'Changes' DVD Years 5 and 6 prior to it being shown to children in these year groups to help them answer any questions their children may return home with.

**How was this policy developed?**

The school seeks to work in partnership with all stakeholders. Parents, governors, the school nurse and school staff have developed this policy through a consultative process. Every year, children are asked for their views on the RSE curriculum and they are given the opportunity to ask questions anonymously via a question box. Any questions which are deemed inappropriate to consider at primary level are not discussed but children are advised to speak to their parents.

**The stages undertaken were:**

The policy is based upon guidelines issued by the East Riding of Yorkshire Council, legal requirements and guidance from the DCFS (see Appendix 2 for references). A period of consultation took place and amendments were made accordingly. As with all policies, approval by the Governing Body (who bear a legal responsibility for ensuring the school has a regularly reviewed SRE policy) is required.

**Staff and Governor Training in RSE**

Staff and governor development is addressed as required. When applicable, staff development may involve LA courses, in-house training or external speakers.

**Right of Withdrawal**

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from relationships education. They do however have the right to withdraw their child from some or all Sex Education lessons (that are outside of/ additional to the Science National Curriculum). Parents who may be considering the exercise of this right should first make an appointment with the Headteacher to discuss what such a decision may involve. Parents do not have to give their reasons for withdrawing their children but will be made aware of the implications of removing children. Alternative education will be provided by the school for children withdrawn from RSE sessions.

**Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy**

Day to day monitoring is the responsibility of the RSE/PSHE co-ordinator. Continuous monitoring and reporting to the governing body will be part of the Leadership Team review systems. All staff and governors will regularly monitor to determine the effectiveness of the Policy and its impact upon children. Information will be included in the relevant sections of the Self Evaluation Form (SEF).

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**Appendix 1**

**Possible Teaching Strategies for Sex and Relationship Education**

It is essential that schools can help children and young people develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about sex and relationships. Teachers and other staff may need to overcome their own anxieties and embarrassment to do this effectively. Partnership between school and parents is the key to success. There are a number of teaching strategies that can help this, including:

- establishing ground rules with their pupils;
- using 'distancing' techniques;
- knowing how to deal with unexpected questions or comments from pupils;
- using discussion and project learning methods and appropriate materials; and
- encouraging reflection.

Some teachers will need training and support, perhaps by team teaching or by inviting visitors from outside services or agencies.

*Ground rules*

A set of ground rules will help teachers create a safe environment in which they do not feel embarrassed or anxious about unintended or unexpected questions or comments from pupils. Ground rules will be developed individually with each class or year group. Example ground rules should include:

- no one (teacher or pupil) will have to answer a personal question;
- no one will be forced to take part in a discussion;
- only the correct names for body parts will be used; and
- meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.

*Distancing techniques*

Teachers can avoid embarrassment and protect pupils' privacy by always depersonalising discussions. For example, role play can be used to help pupils 'act out' situations. Case studies with invented characters, appropriate videos and visits to theatre in education groups can all help pupils discuss sensitive issues and develop their decision-making skills in a safe environment. Some of these methods are listed below under discussion and project learning.

*Dealing with questions*

Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting. Many teachers are concerned about responding to unexpected questions or comments from pupils in a whole-class

situation. Having a set of ground rules should reduce the chances of this happening but teachers will need support and training so that they are prepared for the unexpected. For example:

- If a question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupil of the ground rules. If the pupil needs further support, the teacher can refer her or him to the appropriate person, such as the school nurse, helpline or parent

- If a teacher doesn't know the answer to a question, it is important to acknowledge this, and to suggest that the pupil or teacher or both together research the question later;
- If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. In this way, the pupil will feel they have been treated with respect, but the rest of the class will not have to listen to personal experience or inappropriate information. To maintain trust and respect the teacher must remember to talk with the pupil later; and if a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the child protection and safeguarding procedures. (*see Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2009*)

### *Discussion and project learning*

Research into what makes sex and relationship education effective shows that discussion and project learning encourages learning and is enjoyed by pupils. Pupils take part in a structured activity in which they can:

- draw on previous knowledge to develop more understanding;
- practise their social and personal skills;
- consider their beliefs and attitudes about different topics;
- reflect on their new learning and plan and shape future action.

Active learning is most effective when pupils are working in groups. Methods include discussion techniques such as the use of circle time in primary schools, case studies and project work. Teachers should also assess the usefulness of providing factual information in written form for young people to keep for future reference.

### *Reflection*

Reflecting is crucial for learning as it encourages pupils to consolidate what they have learned and to form new understanding, skills and attitudes. Teachers can help pupils reflect on their learning by asking questions like these:

- What was it like doing this discussion today?
- What did you learn from the others, especially those who had a different experience or belief from your own?
- What do you think you will be able to do as a result of this discussion?
- What else do you think you need to think or learn about?

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**Appendix 2**

**References and Useful Sources of Information**

The following documents are intended for use by teachers when planning programmes of Sex and Relationships Education. Most are available as downloads

**1. Sex and Relationships Education Guidance**

**Ref DfE 2020**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/908013/Relationships\\_Education\\_Relationships\\_and\\_Sex\\_Education\\_RSE\\_and\\_Health\\_Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

tel 0845 6022260

fax 0845 6033360

**2. Ofsted Report on Sex and Relationships Education in Schools**

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

tel 020 7421 6800/6774

Fax 01787 312950

**3. The National Curriculum Handbook DfEE/QCA  
for secondary teachers.**

[www.nc.uk.net](http://www.nc.uk.net)

tel 01787 884288

**4. National Healthy School Standard. Sex and Relationships  
Education.**

[www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk](http://www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk) (then go to site map for easy access to other areas)

tel 020 7413 1865

**5. Personal, social and health education at key stages 3 and 4: Initial  
guidance for schools**

[www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)