

St. Helen's Catholic Primary School  
Ysgol Gynradd Gatholig Santes Helen



RSE Policy

## **Vision and Mission**

Our school is a Catholic community which is characterised by the Gospel spirit of freedom, justice, forgiveness, compassion and love. These values permeate the life and work of our school. As Catholic school we are very proud of our Catholic tradition and the Gospel Values upon which our faith is built.

“Together we Believe † Achieve and Succeed”

At our school we aim to:

- Provide the highest quality education for all our children, developing their full potential spiritually, morally, socially and academically;
- Build on and strengthen the partnership which exists between home, school and parish;
- Show care and respect for God’s creation and develop responsibility in sustaining our ever changing world.

### **Vision for Relationship and Sex Education.**

At St. Helen’s Catholic Primary School we are inspired by Jesus to be the very best we can be. We look after one another and show respect and love through our relationships with one another. Jesus is invited into our lives. In the Beatitudes, Jesus invites us to lead a full life with him by explaining what makes people blessed or happy. This is about understanding how loving our neighbour enables us to be fulfilled too. Therefore, having a good relationship with ourselves and the other people in our lives makes us grow and flourish and we respect that everyone is a unique and beautiful part of God’s creation. We are all children of God, called to grow in love for him through the person of Jesus Christ and to spread the Good News through the action of the Holy Spirit.

### **Procedures**

The following groups have been consulted as part of producing this policy.

- staff
- governing body
- parents
- Diocesan Education Service

In consultation with the Governing Body, the policy will be implemented in 2018, reviewed every (two years), by the Head teacher, RSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body, Staff and pupils. The next review date is (Sept 2020).

The policy will be circulated to all members of the Governing Body and all members of staff. See also the school prospectus and the school website where a full copy of the policy is available. The Diocesan Director of Education/Director of RE will be sent a copy of the school’s RSE policy and it is the duty of the Governing Body to ensure that this is up to date.

## **Rationale**

As a Catholic primary school in the Province of Cardiff, we use the term Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) as we believe that sex education is set in a wider context of relationship education that is about all aspects of growing a fulfilled and happy life. Sex education is but one dimension of this greater whole.

The defining belief of Christianity is that God took on human form. This endows the human person with an extraordinary dignity that goes beyond that of all other forms of life and shows that humanity alone can embrace this relationship with God. Therefore, our relationship with our own bodies is not casual – our bodies are the dwelling place, the ‘temple’ of the Holy Spirit. Any teaching about love and sexual relationships in school must be rooted in this belief which is expressed in the Church’s teaching about relationships, marriage, sex and family life.

The Church educates young people as part of complete human formation. Education about human love is no less a part of a Catholic school’s responsibility than teaching about Mathematics or English. At St. Helen’s school we teach young people about how to grow in relationships, including understanding loving relationships and acknowledging that children’s first experience of love is in the home. We encourage children from the earliest age to recognise that they are all children of God and that each person shares a God-given dignity. As children mature, we encourage them to follow the example of Jesus and live lives inspired by the Gospel virtues, enabling them to follow His commandment to “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Mark 12:31). This is the basis for all relationships in our school. Teaching about relationships in our schools is supported by Christian virtue teaching as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and in line with ‘Fit for Mission? Schools’.

Legal guidelines suggest that relationship and sex education should build on the children’s own experiences, be sensitive to the specific domestic contexts the children come from, form attitudes and values towards relationships, develop personal and social skills and increase the knowledge and understanding of each young person as they grow about their relationships and well-being, including sexual health. We support all these aims in educating about relationships and sex education by incorporating them into the wider understanding of human relationships and human formation as reflected in the relevant CBEW and CES RSE Guidance.

## **Statutory framework**

The statutory framework that surrounds education about human relationships can be found on the CES website.

The Governing body of all Vale of Glamorgan Catholic schools are using the RSE Archdiocese of Cardiff Scheme which is in line with Catholic teaching and guidance from Welsh Government documentation. As a school we respect the statutory rights of withdraw from any or all parts of sex education and inform parents of what and how this is to be taught and provides opportunities for parents to discuss concerns before making their decision. As a Catholic school committed to the education of the whole person, teaching on relationships and sexuality will be reflected in each relevant part of the curriculum. Whilst some aspects of RSE will be more appropriately explored in Knowledge and Understanding of the World and Science lessons others will be more appropriately explored in RE lessons. Each

curriculum area should speak with consistency about the human person and how we think and act lovingly.

### **Virtues and Values**

Gospel virtues and values underpin the RSE curriculum. The Christian tradition describes behaviour or habits that lead to happiness, human flourishing and a closer relationship with God as virtues. These virtues are described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and fall into two groups. The theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (sometimes simply 'love' is used instead of 'charity') are about developing the habits of being open to the work of the Holy Spirit and developing a deeper relationship with God through living a balanced and good life. The cardinal virtues of practical wisdom (prudence), justice, fortitude and temperance help people develop habits of reason, fairness, emotional resilience and self-mastery. They are human virtues and, as such, are part of the development of people of all faiths or none as they learn how to flourish, thrive and to have a life supported by strong and caring relationships. The cardinal virtues are drawn from the teachings of Plato and Aristotle and are held in common with people of many faiths and secular beliefs. St. Thomas Aquinas attributes the theological virtues as having their foundation in God, they complete the cardinal virtues and are the way people can reach "the abundant life" (John 10:10).

At St. Helen's we live out the Gospel values shared in the Beatitudes, throughout the life of school by identifying 16 Virtues which we call the Pupil Profile and all stakeholders understand that these virtues will be lived out and encouraged in our children throughout their time in our schools.

Children are encouraged to progress in knowledge about moral behaviour throughout their time at school. Our children are encouraged to say 'thank you' to God; to be happy and cheerful to care about other people; to reflect on their behaviour in the light of the example of Jesus' care for others; to value kindness; and to evaluate their behaviour and give reasons for the choices they have made.

As pupils progress through Key Stage Two they will develop a deeper understanding of what is moral behaviour and be able to say why this is important for personal happiness and for a closer relationship with God. In addition to the points made above, pupils are given opportunities to learn how prayer enables them to make space for God in their lives and offers opportunities for reflection and growth.

By the end of Year 6, children should be able to explain some behaviour choices by reference to their beliefs and values, for example, by referring to Jesus teaching about forgiveness.

### **The Aim and Objectives of RSE**

The aim of RSE is part of our aim to educate the complete human person. This is expressed in *Fit for Mission? Schools* (2009) as follows:

*The fundamental needs of the human person are the focus of Catholic education – intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual, and eschatological (Our eternal destiny). These fundamental needs can only be truly fulfilled through a rich and living encounter with the deepest truths about God and the human person.*

*This is why Christ and His Gospel must be the foundation of the educational project of each school and college, because He is 'the perfect Man in whom all human values find their fullest perfection'*

*(Congregation for Catholic Education, The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School). Therefore, the Catholic school or college is called to keep the Gospel whole and alive amongst pupils, families, and staff.*

RSE should therefore deepen the following areas of understanding:

- To develop self-knowledge, and respect and love of self;
- To invite young people to develop and deepen a loving relationship with God;
- To invite young people to understand that their life has a purpose;
- To invite young people to develop and deepen relationships with each other based on mutual respect and care and to understand this is an expression of God's love;
- To foster an understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church about how to live a full life, a life of virtue, and the place of human sexuality in living a full life, marriage and parenthood that is appropriate to the stage of maturity of the young people;
- A strong awareness of their own safety and the nature of appropriate consent;
- To have an understanding of the law in England and Wales about Equality and Marriage, appropriate to age and maturity.

We will seek to:

- develop attitudes of awe and wonder for the gift and beauty of self, respect for each other as children of God and rejoice in the goodness of God's creation.
- develop attitudes of responsibility towards ourselves and others, recognising the dignity in all.

enable children to understand the choices they make and how they can help or harm themselves and others.

- encourage children to learn about expressing their own emotions and being respectful of the emotions and behaviours of others.
- encourage the whole school to be like a loving family recognising God as a merciful and generous father as Jesus taught in the Lord's prayer.
- encourage everyone in the school to recognise their part in the school family and work together for reconciliation when relationships in the school falter.
- encourage everyone in the school to value humility, mercy and compassion and to respond with empathy to the problems of others.
- develop children's knowledge of when to say 'no' to behaviours or attitudes that harm their dignity or the dignity of others and to be responsible for their own safety.
- develop children's experience of what it is to be happy so that they begin to understand the difference between happiness and gratification and value patience.
- teach children about the media and their choices, about what to watch, what games to play, what rules apply and that the dignity of all does not just apply to people who are physically seen, it applies to online relationships too.
- support children when relationships in their lives are challenging and teach them that there are people in school who will listen if they are experiencing changes that make them frightened or uncomfortable.
- foster an atmosphere in school which celebrates the work of the Trinity through the life of the school and its relationship with the Church.
- teach children about the beauty of the Church's teaching about love and God's love for them which is shared in the Sacraments.

- sensitively share the Church's teaching about marriage and family life as a way to live in loving relationships with others and with God.

## **Inclusion**

At St. Helen's we value the uniqueness of every person, we identify that young people mature in different ways. Our teaching about relationships and sexuality is respectful of each child's starting point, their faith, culture and background. Lessons are framed by this understanding and young people encouraged to respect each other in their differences, and develop an approach of dialogue. We will ensure that RSE is accessible to all pupils and is differentiated to take into account any additional learning needs.

## **Equality**

The governing body has wide obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to ensure that St. Helen's endeavour to do its best for all of the pupils, irrespective of ability (physical and mental), race, ethnicity, nationality, maternity, pregnancy, sex, gender identity or orientation or whether they are looked after children.

See Equality policy

## **Programme of study**

The Province recommends appropriate resources to its family of schools in Section 2.1 above. These range from ages 3-19 years and provide suggested areas of study and outcomes for the young people it serves. It is envisaged that this programme will be taught in discreet lessons, in cross curricular lessons, particularly R.E. and science and fundamentally embedded in the ethos of the school through assemblies, classroom discussions and the centring of all relationships in school on the person of Jesus Christ. The programme of study is based on the understanding of the Church of human nature and human sexuality, and aims to help young people develop their sense of purpose and character. It should be taught as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and will thus have room for the expression of alternative viewpoints by pupils.

RSE will be taught through a wide range of teaching strategies, with clear ground rules for discussions established. Parents are involved throughout and informed when lessons are taking place and given the opportunity to view material used with the pupils. Supporting resources are also used.

Schools will monitor progress in understanding, linking with the R.E., PSW,CD and Science policies. Children's well-being will be monitored, for example, through a positive behaviour policy and/or encouraging children to be responsible for the choices they make. SELFIE assessments will provide a window into individual children's well-being.

## **Parents**

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children. Our schools assist parents in this task also in RSE, aiding and completing (where needed) the work of parents and furnishing children and adolescents with an evaluation of "sexuality as value and task of the whole person, created male and female in the image of God". (Educational Guidance in Human Love (1983) Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education n69). Children's first experience of relationships and love are in the home. At our school we seek to work with parents and support them as their children grow and begin to develop their own character

as well as experiencing changes in their physical appearance. Parents have been consulted about this policy before it was ratified by the governing body.

Parents are informed of their right to withdraw their children from RSE lessons, (though they are not able to withdraw their children from statutory science lessons).

However, at times, areas of particular sensitivity, such as puberty, letters will be sent home and parents may be invited into school to discuss the content of RSE lessons.

## **Teaching RSE**

There is a named co-ordinator and a Foundation Governor who monitor the programme. All staff are involved in fostering attitudes, living Gospel virtues and shaping behaviour based on a Christian understanding of how to lead a good life. Staff are called to be role models of the school's ethos in their relationships with other staff members, their conduct towards parents and their care for the children in the school. Staff who are not Catholic themselves must conduct their behaviour in school in accordance with the vision and mission of the school.

Teaching and learning about human relationships will be part of the life of the school.

However, the programme of study will be taught through cross curricular dimensions where appropriate, such as R.E., PSW,CD, Science and IT.

Sometimes, the children's learning will be best supported by using other agencies, such as the school nurse, or other visitors to school. Such visitors will be guided to read the protocol for visitors to our school and will agree in writing to follow the instructions. The appropriate 'protocol' available on the CES website will be used for this purpose.

## **Supporting children and young people deemed to be at risk**

Like all other subjects, RSE always needs to be taught in a differentiated manner appropriate to the maturity of the children. It needs to be framed so that the young people who are participating know that there is pastoral support if any of the issues discussed make them feel the need to talk further or share confidential information. This should always be done within the safeguarding framework of the school and it is paramount that all staff teaching RSE have up to date safeguarding professional development.

Questions asked by students that are a cause for concern for the teacher, for example because of their explicit or graphic content, should be addressed in accordance with the school's safeguarding policy and confidentiality procedures.

The following guidance for dealing with questions in teaching RSE will be followed:

***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 a school counsellor, school nurse, helpline, or an outside agency or service;***
- ***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 school's child protection procedures.***
- (DfE Sex and Relationships Guidance, 4.5 'Dealing with questions' 0116/2000)

The policy will be reviewed by Governors in the Autumn Term of 2020.

Signed :

..... Chair of Governors

..... Headteacher

Date .....