



Saint Augustine's Catholic College

Relationship and Sex Education Policy

RATIONALE

Church Teaching

This programme will convey the unity and coherence of Church teaching on human sexuality and the dignity of life. Church teaching will be communicated as a “consistent ethic of life”, not a series of arbitrary or random prohibitions since this miscommunicates the positive value placed by the Church on the value and beauty of human sexuality evidenced in the creation of Man and Woman, as representative of God’s own image (Gen 1:26).

The approach is to encourage young people to enter into a deeper relationship with God, themselves and others and is founded on a realisation that:

- every human life has an intrinsic and absolute value through being created by God and in the image of God;
- this value derives from the simple fact of existing and is not dependent on an individual’s age, abilities, social acceptability or any other characteristic;
- self-respect and respect for each other must underline all human relationships.

This Policy is in line with the Clifton Diocese Guidance for Education in Relationships and Sex Education in Schools

St. Augustine’s takes its responsibility to provide relevant, effective and responsible sex and relationship education (RSE) to all of its pupils as part of the school personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) curriculum very seriously. The school wants parents and pupils to feel assured that sex education will be delivered at a level appropriate to both the age and development of pupils, and safe to voice opinions and concerns relating to the sex education provision.

This policy is drafted by Head of Pastoral in consultation with Head of Religious Studies and the Head Teacher. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss this policy at parents’ evenings, and teaching and non-teaching staff are invited to discuss it during training sessions. The policy is reviewed and approved by the governing body annually.

Policy Aims

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about teaching sex, sexuality and sexual health in a way that is fully understood and effectively retained by pupils in our care. It is also about teaching what it is to be in a caring, stable and mutually supportive relationship with another person, and how to control and understand feelings that come with being in a relationship. RSE will outline the importance of marriage for family life and the raising of children, as well as highlighting the role of marriage and other stable relationships as building blocks for community and society.

The school would like to emphasise that by providing comprehensive RSE we are not encouraging pupils to become sexually active at a young age. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the right provision is in place so that pupils may have all the background knowledge they need to make informed decisions and responsible choices as they grow up.

Through the provision outlined in this policy we also aim to raise pupils’ self-esteem and confidence, trying to develop communication and assertiveness skills that can help them stay true to their values if challenged by others, their peers or what they see in the media. We hope to teach pupils to be accepting of the different beliefs, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, physical and mental abilities,

backgrounds and values of those around them. We want our pupils to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle, teach them to care for and respect their bodies and provide them with all the right tools that will enable them to seek information or support, should they need it, both during their school years and after.

1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

School Staff

The RSE curriculum is delivered at St. Augustine's by the RE department, whose trained staff know how to deliver sex education; this includes sessions on confidentiality, setting ground rules, handling controversial issues, responding to awkward questions and an introduction to the rationale of why teaching RSE is so important. There are certain members of the school leadership team, such as the Head of Pastoral, who will hold more responsibility for ensuring that the school's sex education provision is relevant to our pupils and effective, but this is generally a responsibility for all staff members and the school expects staff to voice opinions and share expertise in this area.

Governors and senior leaders will:

- Develop this school policy and review it on a **yearly basis**
- Develop this policy in relation to the directives of the Diocese of Clifton and The Bishops' Conference for England and Wales
- Ensure that RE staff are updated on any modifications made to the diocesan RSE programme and how to deliver lessons impacted upon by such changes.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with policy changes, and familiar with school policy and guidance relating to sex education.
- Ensure that sex education is age-relevant and appropriate across all year groups; this means ensuring that the curriculum develops as our pupils do and meets their needs.
- Ensure that the knowledge and information regarding RSE to which all pupils are entitled is provided in a comprehensive way.
- Support parental involvement in the development of the RSE curriculum.
- Communicate freely with staff, parents and the governing body to ensure that everyone is in understanding of the school policy and curriculum for sex education, and that any concerns or opinions regarding the provision at the school are listened to, taken into account and acted on as is appropriate. We want the provision of sex education at home to be complementary to the provision the school provides, and this should be clearly communicated to parents and additional support given where necessary or requested.

All staff will:

- Take it upon themselves to ensure that they are up to date with school policy and curriculum requirements regarding sex education. Any areas that they feel are not covered or inadequately provided for should be reported back to the Head of Pastoral.
- Encourage pupils to communicate concerns regarding their social, personal and emotional development in confidence, listen to their needs and support them seriously. If a student comes to a member of staff with an issue that that member of staff feels they are not able to deal with alone, they should take this concern to their Head of Year. No one else should be informed at this stage, and a breach of confidentiality may fall under staff misconduct and disciplinary procedures.

RE staff will:

- Tailor their lessons to suit all pupils in their class, across the whole range of abilities, including those pupils with special educational needs. If teachers need support in this area they should speak to the **school SEN coordinator**.

Pupils

Pupils must be made aware that the RSE curriculum is delivered in their RE lessons and that the content is aimed at their personal development. Students should be respectful towards and supportive of one another with issues that arise through RSE. Listening in class, being considerate of other people's feelings and beliefs, and complying with confidentiality rules that are set in class are key to effective

provision. Pupils who regularly fail to follow these standards of behaviour will be dealt with under the **school behaviour policy**.

See ***Behaviour for Excellence Policy*** – *College Website*

In line with our whole school pastoral support system, we also hope that students will feel comfortable to talk to any member of staff, in confidence, regarding any concerns they have in school relating to sex education or otherwise. Conversations of this nature between staff and pupils will be held in confidence; however staff may take concerns to the college designated member of staff for CP or their deputy if there is a child protection concern or they feel ill-equipped to deal with the issue at hand.

Parents

The school expects parents to share the responsibility of sex education and support their children's personal, social and emotional development. We encourage parents to create an open home environment where pupils can engage, discuss and continue to learn about matters that have been raised through school RSE (and PSHEE). Parents are also encouraged to seek additional support in this from the school where they feel it is needed. For information on accessing school support, see section 5.

2. IMPLEMENTATION AND CURRICULUM

Through this aspect of our curriculum we aim to explore different attitudes, values and social labels, and develop skills that will enable our pupils to make informed decisions regarding sex and relationships. It is important that pupils know the difference between fact, opinion and belief.

Guest Speakers

We may invite guest speakers into school to talk on issues related to sex and relationships. It may be the case that the subject under discussion is better coming from an expert or experienced health professional who can challenge pupils' perceptions. A teacher will be present throughout these lessons. Visitors will be given a copy of this policy and expected to comply with the guidelines outlined within it.

Terminology

Pupils will be taught the anatomically correct names for body parts, but slang or everyday terms used in certain social circles will be discussed; this will surround discussion about what is and isn't acceptable language to use.

Dealing with difficult questions

Ground rules in class are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter. Some strategies staff may use to support this might be:

- an anonymous question box; this will enable pupils to feel more comfortable to ask questions without being identified
- making the classroom a cone of silence; this means that whatever is discussed in the classroom stays in the classroom and should not be brought up at any other time. We hope this will give pupils the sense that they are in a safe zone to speak freely about sex and relationships.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

The school works hard to ensure that all aspects of the school curriculum are inclusive and support the needs of pupils of all ranges of abilities. Staff should differentiate lessons to ensure that all members of the class can access the information fully, and this is no different when it comes to RSE.

The school will use a variety of different strategies to ensure that all pupils have access to the same information. Some of these:

- use of expert guest speakers
- practical activities
- using DVDs or video
- group and paired activities.

Withdrawal from RSE

- The school aims to keep parents informed about all aspects of the RSE curriculum and urges parents to read this policy. Parents can request access to resources and information being used in class, and the school will do everything it can to ensure that parents are comfortable with the education provided to their children in school. It is, however, a statutory right of parents or carers to withdraw the children in their care from RSE. This excludes withdrawal from the elements on human growth and reproduction which fall under the National Curriculum science.
- Any parent wishing to withdraw their child from RSE should contact the Head of Pastoral who will arrange a meeting to discuss their concerns. RSE is a vital part of the school curriculum and supports child development and we strongly urge parents to carefully consider their decision before withdrawing their child from this aspect of school life. However, it is acknowledged that the final decision on the issue is for the parent to take.

Complaints

- Parents or carers who have complaints or concerns regarding the RSE curriculum should contact the school and follow the school's complaint policy.

Equal Opportunities

- RSE lessons provide a good background for talking openly and freely about the diversity of personal, social and sexual preferences. Prejudiced views will be challenged and equality promoted. Any bullying that relates to sexual behaviour or perceived sexual orientation will be dealt with swiftly and seriously. This is the case for bullying of any kind and the procedures regarding this are outlined in the **school's Behaviour for Excellence policy**.
- Specific lessons for transgender issues have been created using the guidance from the Catholic Church and Stonewall, as found in the 'Made in God's Image' guidance. These are delivered, as per diocesan advice, in Year 9.

Safeguarding and Confidentiality

- We hope to provide a safe and supportive school community where pupils feel comfortable seeking help and guidance on anything that may be concerning them about life either at school or at home. Training around confidentiality will be provided to all teachers; (level one CP training)
- It may be the case that discussion around what is acceptable and not acceptable in relationships may lead to the disclosure of a child protection issue. If this is the case, the school's **child protection and safeguarding procedure** should be followed. (Policies on college website)
- Personal information about pupils who have approached a teacher for discussion should not be shared with any other person. If there is a child protection concern, the information must *only be shared with the members of staff designated for CP and deputy CP* as is outlined in the school child protection and safeguarding procedure.
HM Government Information Sharing Guidance 2008.
(Staff members that breach the right to a child's privacy by disclosing or sharing confidential information with no reason to do so will be dealt with under the school's **staff discipline, conduct and grievance procedures**.)
- If a staff member is approached by a pupil under 16 who is having, or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, the teacher should:
 - Ensure that the pupil is accessing all the contraceptive and sexual health advice available and understands the risks of being sexually active.
 - Encourage the pupil to talk to their parent or carer. Pupils may feel that they are more comfortable bringing these issues to a teacher they trust, but it is important that children and their parents have open and trusting relationships when it comes to sexual health and the school will encourage this as much as possible.

- Decide whether there is a child protection issue. This may be the case if the teacher is concerned that there is coercion or abuse involved. If a member of staff is informed that a pupil under 13 is having, or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, this will be dealt with under child protection procedures.

Pupils with special educational needs may be more vulnerable to exploitation and less able to protect themselves from harmful influences. If staff are concerned that this is the case, they should seek support from SEN coordinator/ Head of Pastoral to decide what is in the best interest of the child.

Advice and Treatment

Staff who are approached by pupils with a concern about having contracted or possibly contracted a sexually transmitted disease should refer them immediately to the School Nurse/Head or Head of Pastoral. Providing advice on contraception and practising safe sex is a key part of the school's RSE provision. We also encourage parents to engage their child in open discussion about practising safe sex.

There is no reason for staff to expect to be made aware of a pupil or colleague's HIV or hepatitis status, and no person will be discriminated against because of this if there is a disclosure of this type of information.

The school's **first aid policy** covers protection for all school members against infection from blood-borne viruses.

(Policy available on college website)

3. MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The educational and personal needs of our pupils develop in line with varying societal pressures and economic change. Our aim is to provide RSE that is relevant and tailored to meet the needs of our pupils, depending on their age and stage of personal development. For this reason we review the RSE curriculum annually, and will update any revisions to the school policy or sex education curriculum via the college website.

We aim to monitor the effectiveness of our sex education provision through:

- classroom observations
- departmental curriculum reviews

The school will review this policy annually, evaluating its effectiveness by taking into account feedback from pupils, staff and parents, as well as what has come to light through classroom observations and information we receive from national reports and curriculum reviews.

4. SUPPORT

We hope that pupils will feel safe in the school environment to talk to any member of staff in confidence about any areas of concern regarding their personal, social and emotional development, including matters raised by or relating to sex education. We promote the school ethos as one of inclusion and acceptance throughout all areas of school activity and hope that pupils respond to this by feeling comfortable to ask questions and continue their learning both in and outside the classroom.

Parental Engagement Evenings, held at the beginning of each academic year, will inform parents of:

- **the curriculum content – Year 7**
- **modifications to curriculum content, as required – Years 8-13**

This policy was adopted in January 2018 and will be reviewed annually