



## Relationships and Sex Education

### Mission Statement

Empowered by the example of Christ, St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School strives to promote the education and development of our children in an atmosphere of love and mutual respect.

### **Foreword from Bishop Richard Moth**



**“The Church as a mother is under an obligation to provide for its children an education by virtue of which their whole lives may be inspired by the spirit of Christ.”<sup>1</sup>**

These words, from Decree of the Second Vatican Council on Education, speak of the motivation for our Catholic schools. Our schools are places where the relationship with Christ, to which all are called, enables those we educate to take their place in the Church and Society conscious of their dignity as children of God.

Our schools provide the “principal means of helping parents to fulfil their role in education.”<sup>2</sup> In entrusting their children to our schools, parents provide them with the best possible start in life, grounded in the deepening of their faith through prayer and the recognition of the presence of God in all things.

Our belief in the unique dignity of the human person as made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in our Catholic schools. To this end, RSE is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person and firmly embedded in the Religious Education framework as it is concerned primarily with nurturing the human wholeness of our pupils.

I am pleased to commend this RSE policy to you and am confident you will find it both invaluable and reassuring as you prepare for the new academic year.

With every Blessing,

***‘I have come that you might have life and have it to the full’ John 10:10***

<sup>1</sup> VATICAN II, Declaration *Gravissimum Educationis* on Christian Education, n.3. (GE)

<sup>2</sup> Code of Canon Law, c. 796§1.

## Aims

- To encourage each person to see themselves as a valued member of a wider community who can act independently and make a positive contribution for the good of all.
- To foster a sense of awe and wonder in God and in creation by giving opportunities to take a full, conscious and active part in Christian celebration.
- To create self-discipline through an awareness of the consequences of our actions, to nurture positive behaviour, secure in the knowledge of forgiveness.
- To ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, can protect themselves and ask for help and support when needed.
- To ensure that pupils are prepared for puberty and the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences that adult life will bring.
- To prepare pupils to play an active role as citizens and to understand the Catholic vision of what it means to be citizens of the Kingdom/reign of God.
- To provide each child with access to all areas of the curriculum and support them to fulfil their individual level of achievement and acquire a thirst for knowledge.
- To impart the joy and value of the treasured gift of learning.

## Teaching and Learning in RSE

We start with the belief that human life, from the moment of conception, is sacred. We recognise the unique value and dignity of the human person, made in the image and likeness of God. We understand that human sexuality is a gift, to be celebrated in the context of a healthy, loving marriage. At the same time, we endeavour to demonstrate pastoral sensitivity for the cultural, personal and family circumstances of each child, while maintaining the integrity of Catholic belief and teaching, as appropriate for primary aged children.

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we follow a syllabus for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) that follows the principles and values of the wider Catholic Church. The scheme we choose to adopt is called, "A Journey in Love". It combines elements of the RE, PSHE and Science curricula to help us in delivering an experience for the children, which is both factually informative and spiritually grounded.

RSE is lifelong learning about spiritual, physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity – this would be inappropriate teaching.

As part of, "A Journey in Love", we revisit the following aspects each year:

- **Spiritual Development**

Growing in an understanding of our bodies as a gift from God - to be celebrated and cherished throughout our lives.

- **Physical Development**

Growing in an understanding of how the human body grows and changes - examining the similarities and differences between all people and genders.

- **Moral Development**

Growing in an understanding of what makes a healthy relationship - learning about how we can make positive choices to improve our lives.

- **Emotional Development**

Growing in an understanding of our own and others' emotions - learning to recognise how we feel and what affects the way we feel.

The themes studied by each year group are set out as follows:

**- Year R: God loves each of us in our uniqueness.**

We explore that, although every person looks and behaves differently, God loves each of us.

**- Year 1: We meet God's love in our family.**

We examine how all our families are different but that we are all part of God's family.

**- Year 2: We meet God's love in the community.**

We explain that, as brothers and sisters in Christ, we are part of a much larger family and so we need to treat others the way we want to be treated.

**- Year 3: How we live in love.**

We discuss how and why it is important to build good relationships (or friendships) with the people around us - so we do not feel alone.

**- Year 4: God loves us in our differences.\***

We study the differences between male and female bodies and take a first look at the main stages of a baby's development in the womb.

**- Year 5: God loves me in my changing and development.\***

We describe the stages of development from child to adulthood through puberty.

**- Year 6: The wonder of God's love in creating new life.\***

We examine in detail the male and female reproductive organs and explain what sexual intercourse is, in the context of a loving, heterosexual marriage. We look in greater detail at the stages of foetal development in the womb - right up to birth.

*\*NB - In view of the national curriculum's statutory programmes of study for science, as published in 2014, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School does not interpret any of our RSE curriculum to contain statutory content. **All themes studied are therefore non-statutory.***

### **Relationships with Parents**

At St Joseph's, we wholeheartedly embrace the Catholic Church's view that parents are the primary educators of their children. We understand that each family will recognise significance and value in different aspects of the school's work in RSE and we endeavour to support all parents in their role as primary educators. It is our intention to work alongside our parents.

This means that we will:

- Communicate with parents in a timely fashion regarding their child's RSE.
- Make every effort to share and discuss the resources we use as a school with parents.
- Support parents in delivering RSE with their child, if they so wish.
- Be clear about the statutory and non-statutory aspects of our curriculum, so parents can make an informed decision about their child's education.

Parental feedback will always be gratefully accepted. A parent's observations of their child's response to RSE sessions will prove a valuable source of information in looking to improve and develop our practice.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Teachers will reflect on and evaluate their experience of teaching RSE and the response and reaction of children when completing their lesson evaluations. These reflections will provide a basis for further development in the planning and delivery of RSE activities.

Governors will seek assurance that the school's policy is wholly reflective of the school's practice and is enacted in each part. They will consider a range of evidence from teachers, children and their parents in helping the school evaluate and improve outcomes for learners.

Children will be encouraged to reflect openly and honestly on their learning and the learning experience generally. Their thoughts and suggestions will be considered by teachers in their evaluations of teaching in RSE, as we seek to continually improve our practice.

### **Safeguarding and Child Protection Concerns**

In line with the school's safeguarding procedures, should any indication suggest that a child is vulnerable to or a victim of abuse, all concerns must be shared immediately with, and only with, the DSLs. The safety and wellbeing of the children in our trust is always our primary concern.

### **Guidelines for Teaching**

All teachers have a responsibility of care; as well as fostering academic progress, they will actively contribute to the 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 has been made available to all staff teaching RSE and will continue to be reviewed and developed.

1. It is imperative that a safe, respectful and calm atmosphere is established at the beginning of every RSE session.
2. Children should be made aware that, particularly where personal or intimate content is studied, they will never be asked to share personal information or experiences.
3. Equally, children should be helped to understand that teachers will not be sharing personal information about their own lives or bodies.
4. We expect children to behave in a respectful and tolerant manner at all times - the school's approach to behaviour and anti-bullying is clear: any indication of discriminatory behaviour,

including homophobia, will be firmly and decisively tackled and should be reported to the Head teacher immediately.

5. Children should be given every opportunity to ask questions, including anonymously in writing.
6. Always explain that all questions are welcomed and that there is no such thing as a bad or wrong question. However, sensitively describe that there may be questions that we cannot answer. In these instances, it will be explained clearly to the child that their question cannot be answered but that they may wish to follow it up with a parent at another point.
7. We promote children's learning in RSE through mixed gender classes as a means of demonstrating the honesty and openness that this aspect of the school's work requires.

**Diocese of Arundel & Brighton Recommended Resources:**

A Journey in Love - Sr Jude Groden RSM and contributors	Mc Crimmons
A Journey in Love supporting DVD	Mc Crimmons

[www.mccrimmons.com/shop/books/a-journey-in-love--volume-1--book](http://www.mccrimmons.com/shop/books/a-journey-in-love--volume-1--book)

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