



# **St. Winefride's Catholic Primary School**

## **Sex and Relationships Education Policy**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Rationale of Sex and Relationships Education

We are created by God in his image - male and female (Gen. 1:27). Thus, our sexuality is an integral part of our individuality. In order that children may grow healthily towards maturity, they need to be taught the implications of their gender and sexuality. Successful relationships can only be built when individuals are comfortable with themselves and are developing their self-knowledge.

“We must protect our children from ignorance and they should be given all the necessary information, and correct answers to their questions. Within the Christian community there is a real need for giving gradual and positive sexual education to our children. Each school, in consultation with governors, teachers and parents, should have or build a developmental programme which aims to help our young people to have a properly formed conscience, to enable them to make right judgements and to take the right actions in the many and varied situations in which they may find themselves.” (Bishops’ Conference of England 1987)

Our policy echoes St. John’s Gospel:

*“I have come that you might have life and have it to the full”* (John 10:10)

and St Irenaeus who said:

*“The glory of God is the human person fully alive.”*

To achieve this, we recommend the development of programmes in these areas:

- growing in friendship with:
- ourselves,
- others,
- the world and
- God.

### 1.2 Vatican II states

*“ ... children and young people should be helped to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual qualities ... they should receive a positive and prudent education in matters relating to sex ... and young people have the right to be stimulated to make sound moral judgements based on a well-informed conscience and to put them into practice with a sense of personal commitment ...”*

Gravissimum Educationis [para.1]  
Second Vatican Council

### 1.3 Statutory Requirements

- 1988 Education Reform Act stated that Sex Education and Health Education are to be given a high priority in our schools.
- 1993 Education Act put in place the requirement for all schools to have a Sex Education Policy in place by September 1994.
- Circular 5/94 from the DFE defined what should and should not be included in Sex Education.
- 2000 DfEE Guidance for Headteachers, Teachers and Governors entitled *Sex and Relationship Education (SRE)* in which Government stressed the importance of 'stable relationships' and recognition for 'religion and cultural background', failed to emphasise adequately the importance of marriage as the essential building block of community and society for the future. It did declare its intention to stop 'inappropriate and unsuitable' materials being used in schools. The paper omitted to explain what 'inappropriate' or 'unsuitable material' actually means.
- 2000 Exploring Life's Choices: Education for Personal Relationships (EPR) in Catholic Schools. A resource for In-service training and the Certificate of Religious Studies produced for the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers by Adrian Dempsey, Chris Fallon, Sean Hall and Paul Uden provides the means for teachers to prepare or update themselves for SRE in today's climate.
- 2000 Archbishop Nichols on behalf of the Bishops' Conference for England & Wales criticised the DfEE guidance paper for its lack of moral principle as a foundation for its recommendations. He declared the hierarchy's intention to ensure that SRE be taught in the context of the Church's moral teaching.

## 2. OVERALL AIMS OF A POLICY FOR SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

We aim to encourage the development of the 'fully alive' person in each area of their relationships.

We do this in the context of supporting parents as the first educators of their children.

### To grow in friendship with themselves

- to know that they are uniquely loved.
- to appreciate their personal worth and talents.
- to recognise and positively respond to their limitations.
- to respect and care for themselves.
- to make informed choices and accept personal responsibility.
- to understand their physical development respecting and reverencing the wonder of their bodies.

### **To grow in friendship with others**

- to know that others are also uniquely loved.
- to deepen their appreciation of their relationship with their parents.
- to appreciate and respect the worth and talents of others.
- to respect the beliefs, values and cultures of others.
- to develop friendships and positive relationships.
- to cope with difficulties in relationships.
- to understand and appreciate the wonder of human love and the creation of new human life.
- to understand their social responsibilities.
- to enable them to become responsible citizens.
- to encourage a progressive understanding and engagement in commitment.

### **To grow in friendship with the world around**

- to appreciate the goodness of creation as loved by God.
- to appreciate the wonder of the beauty of the natural world.
- to learn to respect and care for the natural world.
- to understand the importance of our natural environment and grow in understanding for our responsibility for it.

### **To grow in friendship with God**

- to appreciate that God loves us first and forever.
- to appreciate and value relationship with God as integral to human fulfilment.
- to appreciate the whole of creation as a sign of God's love.
- to develop their personal relationship with God through prayer and meditation.
- to develop their relationship with God through shared prayer and worship.

## **3. ORGANISATION**

From nursery to year 6 we follow the SRE programme 'Journey in Love', which has been advised by Brentwood Diocese. We teach sex education through different aspects of the curriculum. We carry out the main sex education teaching in our personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum.

In PSHE we teach children about relationships, and we encourage children to discuss issues. We teach about the parts of the body and how these work, and we explain to

them what will happen to their bodies during puberty. For example, we tell the boys that their voices will change during puberty and we explain to the girls about menstruation. We encourage the children to ask for help if they need it.

We follow the guidance material in the national scheme of work for science. In Key Stage 1 we teach children about how animals, including humans, move, feed, grow and reproduce, and we also teach them about the main parts of the body. Children learn to appreciate the differences between people and how to show respect for each other. In Key Stage 2 we teach about life processes and the main stages of the human life cycle in greater depth.

In Year 5 and Year 6 we place a particular emphasis on health education, as many children experience puberty at this age. We liaise with the Local Health Authority and Brentwood Diocese about suitable teaching materials to use with our children in these lessons. Teachers do their best to answer all questions with sensitivity and care. By the end of Key Stage 2, we ensure that both boys and girls know how babies are born, how their bodies change during puberty, what menstruation is, and how it affects women. We always teach this with due regard for the emotional development of the children (as stated earlier in this policy).

We arrange a meeting for all parents and carers of children in Year 5 and Year 6 to discuss this particular programme of lessons, to explain what the issues are and how they are taught, and to see the materials the school uses in its teaching.

## **4. THE ROLE OF PARENTS**

We recognise that it is the privilege and responsibility of the family to inform and educate their children in all matters pertaining to human growth and development, particularly in the area of sex education.

The primary role of parents is paramount to the successful implementation of any policy on SRE. The Church community also has a privileged role on collaborating with parents in their educative task and as a school we see our role as supporting them.

The supporting role of the school will be exercised with sensitivity. The dignity, privacy and modesty of children will always be respected. Teachers will ensure that no pupil feels pressured to reveal or discuss private matters not to be involved in a way in which they might feel distaste or embarrassment.

The links between home/school and parish are of fundamental importance. We see our SRE programme as complementing the teaching and life of home and family. It is supportive and of special importance when the home environment is limited.

### **4.1 RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL**

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from sex education where this is not contained in the National Curriculum. We would hope that parents would see the value of educating children in these matters within the context of the faith.

## **5. THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS**

Governors have the legal responsibility of deciding whether or not EPR and Sex Education should be taught in school. Diocesan advice is that the needs of children require that schools provide such education. Governors also, in consultation with staff and advisors, should be involved in the dialogue as to what materials might be used to teach EPR.

## **6. THE ROLE OF OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY**

We encourage other valued members of the community to work with us to provide advice and support to the children with regard to health education. In particular, members of the Local Health Authority, such as the school nurse and other health professionals, give us valuable support with our sex education programme. Other people that we call on include our parish priest, social workers and youth workers.

## **7. THE ROLE OF THE HEAD TEACHER**

It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about our sex education policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the Head Teacher's responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity and follow the guidelines of the Catholic Church.

The Head Teacher liaises with external agencies regarding the school sex education programme, and ensures that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the school policy, and that they work within this framework.

The Head Teacher monitors this policy on a regular basis and reports to governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

## **8. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Teachers conduct sex education lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. In these circumstances the teacher will talk to the child as a matter of urgency. If the teacher has concerns, they will draw their concerns to the attention of the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will then deal with the matter in consultation with health care professionals. (See also Child Protection Policy.)

## 9. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Curriculum Committee of the governing body monitors our SRE policy on an annual basis. This committee reports its findings and recommendations to the full governing body, as necessary, if the policy needs modification. The Curriculum Committee gives serious consideration to any comments from parents about the sex and relationship education programme, and makes a record of all such comments. Governors require the Head Teacher to keep a written record, giving details of the content and delivery of the sex and relationship education programme that we teach in our school.

By order of the Governing Body of St Winefride's Catholic Primary School

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Head Teacher)

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
(RE Coordinator)

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