

# **Sex and Relationship Education Policy**

## **Introduction**

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions with regard to sex and relationship education. We set out our rationale for and approach to sex and relationship education in the school. It is characterised by a whole person, whole school, developmental approach thus setting it firmly within our distinctively Christian vision of education. For the purposes of this policy and school practise we will refer to SRE as Family Life.

## **The Mission and Aims of the School**

Our Mission commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we recognise the importance of Family Life as a contributory factor to the development of the whole child. Our School Aims state that we will endeavour to raise pupils' self-esteem, help them to grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of all persons and develop caring and sensitive attitudes. It is in this context that we commit ourselves to "positive and prudent" Family Life education ('Declaration on Christian Education', Vatican II).

## **Defining Sex and Relationship Education/Family Life**

SRE is learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the development of the pupils' knowledge and understanding of themselves, about what it means to be fully human, called to live in right relationships with self and others. It means developing pupils' abilities to make conscientious decisions about sexuality and behaviour. Good SRE enables pupils to recognise and understand the importance of marriage and family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It has three main elements:

- attitudes and values
- personal and social skills
- knowledge and understanding" (Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfEE).

## **Rationale**

We recognise our pupils as unique persons, created in the image of God, loved by God and intended to have life to the full. We willingly share, with parents, the responsibility to provide "positive and prudent" Family Life education for our pupils. We accept this responsibility in order to ensure that the information pupils receive is accurate. Our intention is to take control of the provision of this aspect of education. We will provide a "whole person ... whole school ... developmental approach" to this curriculum ('Laying The Foundations', Bishops of England and Wales Low Week statement), to allow the Gospel message to be heard. Our aim is to keep our pupils safe and protect them from exploitation. Above all we will provide this Family Life education out of conviction not as a response to some crisis.

## **Aims and Objectives**

- To promote the appreciation and development of attitudes and values which are truly gospel inspired, e.g., love, truth, justice, freedom, integrity and reconciliation
- To embed a strong moral ethos and deliver quality Family Life education with the Diocesan “All that I Am” document as a starting point
- To provide, appropriate to age and ability, full and accurate knowledge and understanding about relationships
- To make pupils aware of contemporary perspectives about relationships and life in a variety of family situations but to understand the views of the Catholic Church
- To enable pupils to develop personal and social skills: to be confident in right relationships, to keep them safe from harm and to protect them from exploitation
- To work with families to create a safe and supportive network for pupils to examine their thoughts and ask questions

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Governors**

- Ensure that the policy is available to parents
- Ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g., SEND, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs
- Ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children from SRE elements that are NOT part of the Nationally agreed Science curriculum
- Establish a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used
- Ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of Family Life within PSHEE

### **Teachers**

- Teach a Family Life curriculum based on Church Teaching, School Policy and the Science Outcomes expected at KS1 and KS2
- Advise governors on content and organisation of Family Life education
- Develop suitable procedures for dealing with parental requests for withdrawal
- Contribute to reviewing existing provision
- Use professional skills in developing the curriculum
- Draw on help and guidance from relevant sources, e.g., health professionals, marriage and family life workers
- Participate in monitoring and evaluating Family Life education.

## **Parents**

Parents, as stakeholders, can contribute towards the development of this policy before it is ratified by the governors. They will be consulted at every stage of the development of the Family Life Education programme, as well as during the process of monitoring, review and evaluation. They will be able to view the resources used by the school in the Family Life programme.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Family Life sessions excepting those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. However, we would remind parents of the words of the late Cardinal Hume. He expressed some concerns about withdrawing children from Family Life lessons. He wondered whether such action might damage the parent-child relationship in terms of confidence and trust, whether it could really inhibit the passing on of information within peer groups and “might well remove one possible means of correcting, or putting in perspective, the uncontrolled information circulating within peer groups.” (Cardinal Hume in a speech given at Bradford, reported in Briefing ....). We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed. Parents will be able to examine the programme their children are following and provide additional preparation and information as they wish.

Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the Headteacher.

## **Provision / Programme**

### **Responsibility**

Responsibility for the Family Life Education programme rests with the governors. The Headteacher carries delegated responsibility and is supported in the oversight of the programme by the SMT, the PSHEE co-ordinator and the Family Life co-ordinator. All staff carry some responsibility for the Family Life programme.

### **Organisation**

The three aspects of Family Life Education are

- attitudes and values
- knowledge and understanding
- personal and social skills

These elements will be delivered to pupils in three inter-related ways: the whole school / ethos dimension; a cross-curricular dimension and a specific Family Life curriculum.

### **Programme**

Pupils in Year 5 and 6 follow the Diocesan guidance for the delivery of Family Life using the “All that I AM” Programme. Pupils in other Year groups are taught the developing elements of Family Life through their RE lessons, PSHEE curriculum, SEAL topics and Science curriculum.

## **Staffing**

All staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the Family Life Education programme. They will be role models for pupils of good, healthy, wholesome relationships as between staff, other adults and pupils. They will also be contributing to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.

Responsibility for the specific Family Life Education programme lies with the relevant curriculum staff. This will normally include science, religious education, physical education, SRE and PSHE.

Teaching strategies will include

- ✓ establishing ground rules
- ✓ distancing techniques
- ✓ discussion
- ✓ project learning
- ✓ reflection
- ✓ active learning
- ✓ brainstorming
- ✓ film & video
- ✓ group work
- ✓ role-play
- ✓ case studies
- ✓ checklists
- ✓ values clarification
- ✓ dealing with questions: defer, delay, refer to others, e.g., parent, pastoral staff,
- ✓ counsellor, health professional

## **Relationship to other policies / initiatives**

This Family Life Education policy is to be delivered as part of the RE curriculum with links made to the PSHEE framework.

## **Inclusion**

Pupils with particular difficulties whether of a physical or intellectual nature will receive appropriately differentiated support in order to enable them to achieve mature knowledge, understanding and skills. Teaching methods will be adapted to meet the varying needs of this group of pupils.

## **Guidelines**

The governors recognise that Family Life Education can be a sensitive issue for all concerned and are concerned that teachers' training and support needs are properly provided for. The governors therefore require the school to provide such training and support to all those involved in the Family Life Education programme. This training will cover legislative requirements, Church teaching, the demands of this policy and the development of appropriate skills to deliver the Family Life Education programme.

Children and young people will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which Family Life Education takes place. Effective Family Life Education will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. Teachers will need to be aware of the needs of their pupils and not let any fears and worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects that a child is a victim of or is at risk of abuse they should follow the school's child protection policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

### **Children's questions**

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which Family Life Education can take place. They want to ensure that pupils can ask questions freely, be confident that their questions will be answered, and be sure that they will be free from bullying or harassment from other children. Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, e.g., where a child's questions hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature.

### **Sensitive issues**

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of Family Life Education. These may be matter of maturity, of personal involvement or experience of children, of disagreement with the official teaching of the Church, of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious or harmful activity. The governors believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the Family Life Education programme. The governors' programme will deal with these issues sensitively, in a broad and balanced way, free from sensationalism and personal bias, at a level appropriate to the needs and experience of pupils. Account will be taken of different viewpoints. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. Pupils will be made aware of both Church teaching and the law as they relate to the issues.

### **Confidentiality and Advice**

All governors, all teachers, all support staff, all parents and all pupils must be made aware of this policy, particularly as it relates to issues of advice and confidentiality.

All lessons, especially those in the Family Life Education programme, will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of Family Life, developing appropriate personal and social skills and becoming appreciative of the values and attitudes which underpin the Christian understanding of what it means to be fully human.

Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents about the issues which are discussed in the programme. Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties, in line with the school's pastoral care policy. Following consultation with the Headteacher they will be able to inform pupils that they can obtain further advice from health professionals, e.g., the school nurse, school counsellor, their GP, or the local young person's advice service.

Teachers should explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance. Teachers will explain that in such circumstance they would have to inform others, e.g. parents, Headteacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken

In the exceptional cases where the school will find itself handling such information without parental knowledge the Headteacher and governor will keep appropriate records and monitor the frequency of such cases. This monitoring will form part of the Headteacher's and governors' on-going monitoring and evaluation of the Family Life Education policy.

### **Monitoring, review and evaluation**

The Family Life Education co-ordinator will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils work at regular intervals. The programme should be reviewed and evaluated biannually by means of questionnaires / response sheets given to pupils, and / or by discussion with pupils, staff and parents. The results of the evaluation should be reported to these groups of interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

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