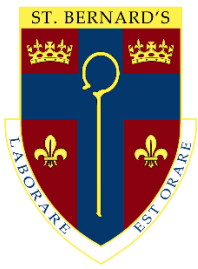


Relationships & Sex Education Policy

Policy Produced By	M Pearce
Date Policy Produced	8/10/24
Date SLT Agreed	
Date Governors Approved	
Date of Next Review	8/10/26
Linked or Related Policies	Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy Equality Policy Statement
Named Persons in this policy	None



St Bernard's Catholic High School

Introduction

We have adopted the Catholic Education Service (CES) and the Diocese of Lancaster's CES model policies as the central structure for this policy, customising it, as necessary, to suit our pupils and to reflect the context within which our school lives out its mission.

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out our intentions about relationships and sex education (RSE). We set out our rationale for, and our approach to relationships and sex education in the school.

Vision and Mission

School Mission Statement

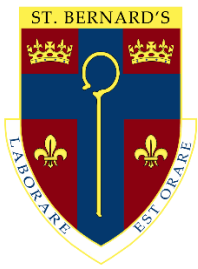
St Bernard's Catholic High School is an inclusive and caring place of "learning, love, and compassion", with Christ at the centre of all that we do. We are committed to serving our community in line with the teachings and values of our Catholic faith, which form the foundation of our pupils' growth and success both here at St Bernard's and beyond, as they move forward in life. We treat all of those in our care with dignity and respect, making each individual feel valued and known in the love of God.

Core Values

- Kindness; Jesus said: "A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." John (13:34)
- Hard work; Jesus said "Let all that you do be done in love." Corinthians (16:14)
- Resilience; Jesus said, "With God all things are possible." Matthew (19:26)

Vision for Relationships and Sex Education

At St Bernard's we are inspired by Jesus to lead lives that are purposeful and enable us to fulfil our talents. We care for one another and show mutual respect and love through our relationships with one another. Jesus is invited into our hearts. In the Beatitudes, Jesus invites us to lead a full life with him by explaining what makes people blessed or happy. Through this we grow in our understanding of how loving our neighbour enables us to be happy too. Happiness can only be truly achieved when we have a good relationship with ourselves, recognising our God-given dignity, which enables us to enter into relationships with other people in our lives, which help 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, created equal and called to grow in love for him through the person of Jesus Christ and to spread the Good News through the work of the Holy Spirit. We are gifted with the love of God and the ability to love others. Our sexuality is part of our total self-gift of the heart and we seek to bring the young people in our care to know the beauty, goodness and truth of the Church's teaching about how to lead a fulfilled life as they grow and change from children into young adults.



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Consultation

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

- Staff
- Governing Body
- Parents
- Diocesan Education Service
- Parish

The consultation took place with parents, the local parish and staff by inviting responses to the consultation policy via the school website.

Implementation and Review of Policy

Implementation of the policy will take place after consultation with the Governors in the autumn term 2024. The policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Headteacher, RSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and Staff.

The policy will be available to all parents via the school's website, and a copy will be available from the school office. Details of the content of the RSE curriculum will also be published on the school's web site.

Defining Relationships and Sex Education

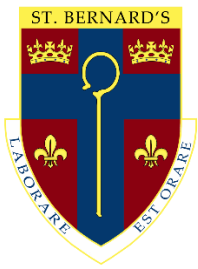
The DfE guidance states that "children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way".¹ It is about the development of the pupil's knowledge and understanding of her or him as a sexual being, about what it means to be fully human, called to live in right relationships with self and others and being enabled to make moral decisions in conscience. As a secondary school, our RSE curriculum should "give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure)."²

Statutory Curriculum Requirements

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

¹ Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 4

² Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 25



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Rationale

"I have come that you might have life and have it to the full." John (10:10).

We are involved in relationships and sex education precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. The belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in a Catholic school. Our approach to RSE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals.

At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity; Father, Son and Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation. As a consequence of the Christian belief that we are made in the image and likeness of God, gender and sexuality are seen as God's gift, reflect God's beauty, and share in the divine creativity. RSE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationship as it is there that sexuality grows and develops.

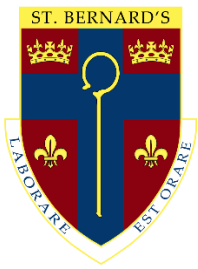
Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales, and as advocated by the DfE, RSE will be firmly embedded in the PSHE framework as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils. It is centred on Christ's vision of being human as good news and will be positive and prudent, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.

All RSE will be in accordance with the Church's moral teaching. It will emphasise the central importance of marriage and the family whilst acknowledging that all pupils have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from. It will also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

Values and Virtues

Gospel values and virtues underpin the RSE curriculum. The Christian tradition describes behaviours or habits that lead to happiness, human flourishing and a closer relationship with God as virtues. Our programme enshrines Catholic values relating to the importance of stable relationships, marriage and family life. It also promotes those virtues which are essential in responding to the God's call to love others with a proper respect for their dignity and the dignity of the human body. The following virtues will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion. Human virtues are part of the development of people of all faiths or none as they learn how to flourish, thrive and have a life supported by strong and caring relationships.

At St Bernard's we live out the Gospel values shared in the Beatitudes, throughout the life of the school. This is evident in the way in which staff model Gospel values and virtues and encourage pupils to do the same.



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Aim of RSE

At St Bernard's we are committed to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, as a school we 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: In partnership with parents, to provide children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education"³ which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

Objectives of RSE

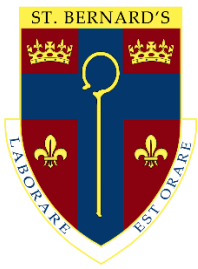
To develop the following attitudes and virtues:

- reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility;
- respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others;
- joy in the goodness of the created world and their own bodily natures;
- responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others;
- recognising and valuing their own sexual identity and that of others;
- celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love;
- recognising the importance of marriage and family life;
- fidelity in relationships.

To develop the following personal and social skills:

- making sound judgements and good choices which have integrity, and which are respectful of the individual's commitments;
- loving and being loved, and the ability to form friendships and loving, stable relationships free from exploitation, abuse and bullying;
- managing emotions within relationships, and when relationships break down, with confidence, sensitivity and dignity;
- managing conflict positively, recognising the value of difference;
- cultivating humility, mercy and compassion, learning to forgive and be forgiven;
- developing self-esteem and confidence, demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others;
- building resilience and the ability to resist unwanted pressures, recognising the influence and impact of the media, internet and peer groups and so developing the ability to assess pressures and respond appropriately;
- being patient, delaying gratification and learning to recognise the appropriate stages in the development of relationships, and how to love chastely;
- assessing risks and managing behaviours in order to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity.

³ Gravissimum Educationis 1



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To know and understand:

- the Church's teaching on relationships and the nature and meaning of sexual love;
- the Church's teaching on marriage and the importance of marriage and family life;
- the centrality and importance of virtue in guiding human living and loving;
- the physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty;
- the facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation;
- how to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception;
- how to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

Inclusion and Differentiated Learning

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances. Pupils with particular difficulties 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 pupils.

Our teaching is respectful of each pupil's starting point, for example, their faith, culture and sexual orientation, and is taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination. Lessons will also help pupils to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber-bullying), use of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help.

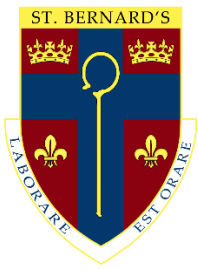
We understand our duty to ensure that teaching is accessible to all pupils. Pupils requiring or requesting additional support will be treated with dignity and respect, and offered support through our pastoral system and through seeking appropriate help, as appropriate, from other agencies.

Equalities Obligations

The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that St Bernard's strives to do the best for all of the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, pregnancy, maternity, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked-after children. These obligations are outlined in our Equality Policy Statement.

Programme of Study

The Diocese of Lancaster has a programme of study for its family of schools. The programme ranges from ages 2-19 and provides suggested areas of study and outcomes for the young people it serves.



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At St Bernard's, the three aspects of RSE - attitudes & values, knowledge & understanding, and personal & social skills - will be delivered in three inter-related ways – in discrete lessons, in cross-curricular lessons, particularly RE 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 teachings of the Church and aims to help young people develop their sense of purpose and character. Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. By teaching RSE as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, it allows pupils to express alternative beliefs and viewpoints where they hold such views.

Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE (in secondary schools/academies relating to forced-marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion, the age of consent and legislation relating to equality). Knowing facts and enabling young people to explore differing viewpoints is not the same as promoting behaviour and is not incompatible with our school's promotion of Catholic teaching. We will ensure that pupils have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals. The programme of study will be supported by published resources, recommended by the Diocese, as well as those created by the school.

At St Bernard's RSE is taught in PSHE, RE and Science lessons. Links to RSE are also made in the Computing curriculum so that pupils recognise ways they could put themselves at risk through the use of technology. PSHE, RE, Science and Computing are delivered throughout Key Stage 3 and 4, and a wide range of different teaching strategies are used. Staff recognise that RSE may consider questions or issues that some pupils will find sensitive, and that it is essential that lessons are sensitive to a range of views. With this in mind, ground rules for discussions are established before embarking on these lessons.

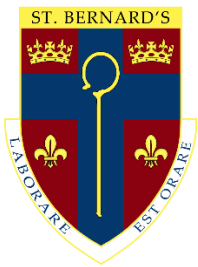
Parents will be informed about how RSE will be delivered through this policy, which is available on the school website. All lessons take account the school safeguarding policy.

Progress and understanding is monitored through regular assessment in Science, RE and Computing, in addition to the monitoring of work in PSHE lessons by teachers. Pupils' well-being is monitored through a positive behaviour policy and by tracking pupils' outcomes based on expectations.

Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents, and other carers who stand in their place, are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children.

Parents must be consulted before this policy is ratified by the Governors. They will be consulted at the development of the RSE 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 RSE programme. Our aim is that, at the end



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of the consultation process, every parent and carer will have full confidence in the school's RSE programme to meet their child's needs.

Parents continue to have the right to withdraw their children from Sex Education except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the Headteacher. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning. We believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed. Please refer to the DfE guidance Page 17 for further details on the right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw).

Responsibility for Teaching the Programme

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lays with the relevant curriculum staff; this will normally include science, religious education, and PSHE teachers. However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE 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.

External Visitors

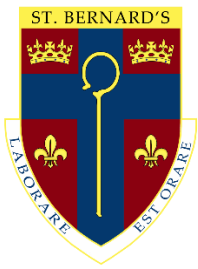
The school may call upon help and guidance from outside agencies and health specialists to deliver aspects of RSE. Such visits will always complement the current programme and never substitute or replace teacher-led sessions. It is important that any external visitor is clear about their role and responsibility whilst they are in school delivering a session. Any visitor must adhere to our code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Checklist for External Speakers to Schools'⁴. Health professionals should follow the school's policies, minimising the potential for disclosures or inappropriate comments using negotiated ground rules and distancing techniques as other teachers would. They will ensure that all teaching is rooted in Catholic principles and practice.

Other Roles and Responsibilities regarding RSE

Governors:

- draw up the RSE policy, in consultation with parents and teachers;
- ensure that the policy is available to parents;
- ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g., SEN, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs;
- ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children;
- establish a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used;

⁴ CES Checklist for External Speakers to Schools, 2016



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- ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHE.

Headteacher:

The Headteacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, the Diocesan Schools' Service and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

PSHE/RSE Co-Ordinator:

The co-ordinator with the Headteacher has a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to RSE and the provision of in-service training. They may be supported by the curriculum deputy and the member of staff with responsibility for child protection.

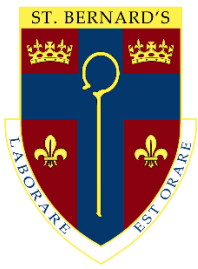
All Staff:

RSE is a whole-school issue. All teachers have a responsibility of care; as well as fostering academic progress they should actively contribute to the guardianship and guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of their pupils. All staff are involved in fostering attitudes, living Gospel values, 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 their school. Teachers will be expected to teach RSE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSE. Staff have been included in the development of this policy and all staff should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them.

Supporting Children and Young People deemed to be a risk

The Governing Body desires that RSE lessons take place in a positive framework, where pupils experience a growing appreciation for their well-being, and that of others, and a deeper understanding that the Church teaches a path of wholeness of mind, body and spirit. Part of this is creating an atmosphere where questions can be asked openly, confident that their questions will be answered and knowing that these questions will not be judged by staff or other pupils. It is vital, therefore, that time is invested in creating this framework of mutual trust and care, whilst respecting personal information. The RSE coordinator must be given access to support and training to facilitate teachers to enable such discussions by creating carefully negotiated ground rules and distancing strategies.

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE. 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 RSE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion (see also Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, Managing difficult questions, page 23 for more detail). Some questions may raise



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issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, e.g. where a child or young person's questions hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature.

Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place. Effective RSE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a safeguarding 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 or young person is a victim of or is at risk of abuse they are required to follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

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 RSE programme, will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and sex, 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/carers about the issues which are discussed and questions that arise in the programme. Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties, in line with the school's pastoral care policy. Teachers should explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance, and these will be dealt with under the terms of the school's safeguarding policy. Teachers will explain that in such circumstances 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.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The RSE 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 will be evaluated biannually by means of questionnaires / response sheets / needs assessment 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.