

# Relationships & Sex Education Policy

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*“This sacred synod likewise declares that children and young people have a right to be motivated to appraise moral values with a right conscience, to embrace them with a personal adherence, together with a deeper knowledge and love of God. Consequently it earnestly entreats all those who hold a position of public authority or who are in charge of education to see to it that youth is never deprived of this sacred right.” (Declaration on Christian Education, Gravissimum Educationis)*

*"Man though, made of body and soul, is a unity. Through his very bodily condition he sums up in himself the elements of the material world. Through him they are brought to their highest perfection . . .*

*For this reason man may not despise his bodily life. Rather he is obliged to hold his body as good and to hold it in honour since God has created it . . ."* [The Church in the Modern World. para: 14 The Essential Nature of Man].

*“The Church is formally opposed to an often widespread form of imparting sex information dissociated from moral principles” (Familiarise Consortio 37)*

## **I. Policy Statement**

This policy has been prepared following changes in the law in relation to sex and relationship education in schools, and in particular the requirement to place such education in a moral framework, having due regard for the value of family life.

Sex and relationship education is mandatory in schools within the framework of the Curriculum (in particular in Health Education) with an opt out clause for those parents who wish to take it.

The concern and sensitivity around AIDS and HIV, coupled with parental and educators anxiety over the misinformation concerning sex and healthy relationships provided by the media, has placed greater emphasis on the requirement for sex education in schools and at home.

The Bishops of England and Wales have, in Conference, expressed the vision that education in sexual matters should have a whole person and whole school approach in line with the mission of schools as Christian communities. This is now the policy of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. This policy was developed in light of the teachings of the Catholic Church and in response to:

- Sex and Relationships Education Guidance DfES 2000
- Supplementary Guidance Sex and Relationship Educaion (SRE) for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century 2013
- Equalities Act 2010
- Not Yet Good Enough: personal, social, health and economic education in schools (Ofsted 2013)
- Life Lessons: PSHE and SRE in schools: Fifth Report (House of Commons Education Committee 2015)

This policy represents an extension of the existing mission and ethos of the School and the principles laid out below restate the school’s approach to education in terms of sex and relationship education. These principles also encapsulate the Church’s teaching, Government legislation and the results of research and experience in sex and relationship education.

- i. Pupils have a right to a curriculum which will help them to develop spiritually, intellectually, morally, socially and culturally and also prepare them for adult life. Sex and relationship education is integral to this process.
- ii. Children and young people belong to different communities, their homes, their schools and their neighbourhood. We must try to foster a true partnership involving home, school and parish community. Each should be as supportive to the other as possible.
- iii. Education in sexuality should be developmental; sex and relationship education should enable sexuality to be integrated into personal growth from infancy through adolescence and beyond. This requires both primary and secondary phases to meet the physical, spiritual, moral and emotional requirements of their pupils through the education they offer. This necessarily involves dialogue and cooperation between primary and secondary spheres of schooling and with parents.
- iv. Education in sexuality is a part of education in relationships. Every young person is entitled to experience a school climate in which the quality of relationships between staff and pupils, between the pupils themselves, is marked by honesty, personal identification, warmth, trust and security.
- v. For such education to be successful it must be fully integrated into the curriculum, for, by its very nature, it

is cross curricular: science, religious education, health education, literature, the arts and PE all have a key role to play. The whole curriculum conveys value and helps in the moral growth of pupils. “The Church is formally opposed to an often widespread form of imparting sex information dissociated from moral principles” (Familiarise Consortio 37)

- vi. Sexuality is essential to our personal identity. It is God’s gift to us. As we grow in our capacity to love, in all contexts of our lives, not just the sexual, we are open and make present the divine in our hearts.
- vii. As we help our children and young people to grow and develop, to do justice to their potential, we have the obligation to offer our children and young people Christ’s vision of being human as “Good News”. We must have good news to offer them in their understanding of their sexuality as well as of every other dimension of their lives.
- viii. Sexuality is a fundamental component of personality, manifestation, communication with others, feeling, expressing, and living human love. It is an integral part of the development of the personality and of the educative process.
- ix. So that we can offer sex education in the spirit of “Good News”, with regard to our becoming more fully human, our education should not be “problem” or “crisis-led”. It should be positive, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.
- x. All the education offered to the school should be understood and accepted by all who work with pupils in the school. Sex education should be integrated into the curriculum fully and not isolated in any way. Religious Education, PSHE/Citizenship, Science, PE, English, Geography and Art all have a part to play in sex education, either as part of the sex education programme or by reinforcing the messages contained within the programme when relevant.

## 2. School Aims

At St Leonard’s we...

- pursue excellence in all and for all;
- take Christ as the model for life;
- strive to create community.

## 3. Issues not specifically covered by the Sex and Relationships Education Policy

As a result of discussion in class, pupils will sometimes seek out staff later to discuss personal problems, ranging from individual sexual advice, to advice on pregnancies and abortion, and exceptionally marriage preparation and guidance. If the issue relates to a possible case of child abuse, then the matter should be handled in line with the school’s policy on Child Protection, and referred to the Deputy Head Teacher / Child Protection Officer.

This policy should therefore be read alongside the following documents:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Acceptable Use of ICT Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equalities Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

These policies are available to staff, parents and pupils on the school website and hard copies are available upon request.

## 4. What is Relationships and Sex Education?

Sex and relationship education concerns the acceptance of one’s own sexuality and the recognition that it is an expression of one’s personality and relationship with others. Education in sexuality covers all the learning required in order to understand our own and other’s sexuality and to develop skills and relationships, based on informed decisions and choices.

Sex and relationship education encompasses more than an understanding of the workings of the reproductive system; it also embraces the understanding of values, attitudes and beliefs towards anatomy, physiology and relationships. Above all, it includes the development of emotional maturity and the acceptance of responsibility and commitment.

The following statements concerning sex education can be found in the Catholic Education Service's guidance on "Education in Sexuality".

- Education in sexuality is an umbrella term for all the learning we need in order to understand and value our own and other's sexuality.
- Education in sexuality is not just about biology and how the reproductive system works. It is about relationship, feelings and behaviour.
- Education in sexuality is more than a body of knowledge; it is about gender, about roles in society, about making choices.
- Education in sexuality is about learning to accept one's own sexuality and recognise its expression as part of one's personality and relationship with others.
- Education in sexuality is about facilitating growth and emotional maturity, helping the individual to go beyond self and to have responsibility.
- Education for the emotional and sexual life is above all to help pupils to have a sense of the other, teaching them to listen, love, to have compassion and tenderness.
- Education in sexuality is a life-long process.
- Education in sexuality recognises that human sexuality is a gift from God. It is concerned with the spiritual and moral as well as the physical and social.
- Education in sexuality promotes discernment concerning different views of sexuality.
- Education in sexuality helps pupils to take responsibility for their actions.

## 5. Aims & Objectives

The aims and objectives of the sex/relationships education programme in the School are to allow its pupils to make informed choices concerning their relationships, based on a personal, moral and social understanding of the importance of sex as part of a life-long and stable relationship.

### *Marriage and Family Life*

*"As part of sex and relationship education pupils should be taught about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and bringing up children. But... There are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside marriage. Therefore pupils should learn the significance of marriage and stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society. Care needs to be taken to ensure there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances."*

(DfES Sex and Relationship Education Guidance 2000)

### 5.1 Aims

- 5.1.1 Understand that sex is valued and treasured as a gift from God. It is sacramental and finds its proper expression in marriage. Those things which devalue and degrade sex or which deny its life-giving potential make us less than the people God intends us to be.
- 5.1.2 Appreciate the value of stable family life, marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood.
- 5.1.3 Make informal decisions regarding their sexuality based on sound, accurate knowledge, decisions that will equip them to avoid risks such as HIV and AIDS, unintended pregnancies, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and unfulfilled relationships.
- 5.1.4 Show respect, consideration and understanding towards others, who may differ in terms of gender, sexual orientation, religious and cultural traditions and social background.
- 5.1.5 The overall aim is to support the personal, moral and social development of all pupils at the school, ensuring that they have the ability to accept their own and others' sexuality in positive ways and to enjoy relationships based on mutual respect, dignity and responsibility free from any abuse.
- 5.1.6 Explore their feelings, attitudes and values and feel comfortable about their sexuality.
- 5.1.7 View their own sexuality as a fundamental and important element of their own person, which affects how we relate to others.

- 5.1.8 The inclusion of positive, person-centred education is at the heart of Catholic Christian education. This education is fundamentally about the development, growth and journey of the whole person towards becoming fully human, fully alive as a unique creation made in God's image.
- 5.1.9 Ultimately, the school aims to have played an important part in the formation of young people who will value marriage and family life and who will be able to enjoy sex as part of a lifelong, stable relationship free from guilt and inhibition.

## 5.2 Objectives

The following objectives are a statement of the school's commitment to a whole school, pupil-centred approach to education in sexuality, but will alter as the priorities for sex education change and the programme develops.

- 5.2.1 To represent the Catholic Church's teaching and perspective throughout the programme.
- 5.2.2 To explore the concept of responsibility within a moral framework.
- 5.2.3 To provide information and knowledge to encourage self-empowerment and assertiveness.
- 5.2.4 To examine and challenge pupils perceptions and opinions towards others.
- 5.2.5 To provide an environment in which pupils can feel secure, comfortable and confident in exploring their sexuality and related issues.
- 5.2.6 To help pupils recognise that sexuality is an essential part of human beings and fundamental to the way in which we as humans relate to one another, within the community.
- 5.2.7 To have an awareness of where pupils are in their knowledge and understanding, so that concerns can be identified.
- 5.2.8 To engender growth in self-respect and worth, recognising that each of us is created in the image of God.
- 5.2.9 To explore the meaning and value of life and give some appreciation of the values of family life.
- 5.2.10 To enable pupils to have some understanding that love is central and the basis of meaningful relationships.
- 5.2.11 To enable pupils to have some understanding of themselves, their own bodies, their emotional development, as they grow and change and have awareness of fertility (the constant fertility of the male and the cyclical fertility of the female) and the changes in feelings the monthly cycle brings.
- 5.2.12 To encourage pupils to reflect on their relationships and recognise the qualities that help relationships for themselves.
- 5.2.13 To encourage pupils to be aware of their attitudes and values and have a sense of responsibility for themselves.
- 5.2.14 To have some understanding of and to give sensitive consideration to the beliefs, values and cultures of others.
- 5.2.15 To provide a forum where pupils can share their concerns and offer a climate of support where they know they will be listened to sensitively.
- 5.2.16 To correct misinformation and to explain the process of human procreation.
- 5.2.17 To enable pupils to recognise the importance of the choices they make and that they are responsible for the decisions they take.
- 5.2.18 To help with careful consideration of contraception and family planning.
- 5.2.19 To help pupils resist peer, social and media pressures where necessary.
- 5.2.20 To help pupils develop their critical faculties and be aware of the values conveyed by the media in relation to self-image and sexuality.
- 5.2.21 To provide room in the sex education programme to address sensitive issues such as homosexuality, birth control, HIV, AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases, abortion and sexual abuse.
- 5.2.22 To keep parents informed of the purpose and content of the programme, to involve parents at every stage in the delivery of the programme, and to consult parents at the outset, seeking their support for the programme.

## 6. Parents

We hope that by providing parents with adequate, accurate information regarding sex education in our school, any worries or anxieties they may have will be allayed.

Parents are informed by letter of the sex and relationship education programme and they will be able to contact the relevant Heads of Year or RE/Science Departments if they have any queries.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from lessons that involve sex and relationship education but not from those aspects which remain in curriculum Science. Parents are encouraged to discuss their decisions with their son/daughter's Head of Year at the earliest opportunity.

The pupils who are withdrawn will be supervised by a member of staff.

## **7. Confidentiality**

Children and young people may make personal disclosures in group settings where an atmosphere of trust is created. With young people it is important that their teacher reaches agreement with the group about confidentiality before personal disclosures are made, however confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if there is cause for concern that needs follow up, in line with the Child Protection Policy.

If, during the course of a discussion either in a lesson or mentoring meeting, a teacher becomes concerned regarding a possible Child Protection issue they should follow the School's Child Protection Policy.

## **8. Sensitive Issues**

### **8.1 Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)**

Within the Pastoral Programme, we inform all pupils of the different sexually transmitted diseases, symptoms, effects and prevention.

### **8.2 HIV & AIDS**

We are committed to the Local Authority's policy on HIV & AIDS, and we endeavour to act in such a way so that no one living with or affected by HIV and AIDS, is excluded or prevented from benefiting from the services our school offer.

Confidentiality concerning a person's HIV status must be safeguarded at all times.

As part of our Religious Education curriculum, we provide clear information about the nature of the virus, transmission, misconceptions and attitudes. We endeavour to foster a sense of responsibility and respect for oneself and others, and to provide young people with the self-esteem, confidence and skills they need to develop healthy relationships.

### **8.3 Contraception**

The DfE makes the following statement about contraceptive advice:-

*"It is important to distinguish between, on the one hand, the schools function of providing education generally about sexual matters and on the other, counselling and advice to individual pupils on these issues ..... particularly if this relates to their own sexual behaviour".*

*"Particular care must be exercised in relation to contraceptive advice to pupils under 16, for whom sexual intercourse is unlawful. The general rule must be that giving an individual pupil advice on such matters without parental knowledge or consent would be an inappropriate exercise of a teacher's professional responsibilities".*

The School is committed to the Fraser Guidelines matters concerning sex advice, guidance and support and a parental access to information. Further information on this can be found at [http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/briefings/gillick\\_wda101615.html](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/briefings/gillick_wda101615.html)

If a teacher believes a pupil is in danger or suspects sexual abuse he/she should refer the matter to the Child Protection Officer who should then follow School and Local Authority Child Protection Policy.

As a Catholic School, a teacher should point out to pupils, as appropriate, the Catholic Church's position regarding sex outside of marriage, contraception and other aspects of Catholic morality.

#### **8.4 Sexual Identity**

As in line with Equal Opportunities legislation, we endeavour to explore this issue in a sensitive and caring way. As teachers, we have a responsibility to educate all pupils about the diversity within society, to encourage pupils to feel positive about their choices and feel free from discrimination.

The issue of sexual identity including LGBT is addressed through the wider issue of relationships. As a Catholic School, we point out to pupils the Church's teachings and we encourage pupils to be non-judgemental in their daily lives towards a person of a different creed, race, sexual orientation, sex or ability through the academic and pastoral curriculum, in lessons, assemblies, retreats and additional activities.

Pupils can be referred to the School Counsellor to discuss any issues of concern to them.

#### **9. Delivery through the Curriculum**

In St Leonard's there are many subjects involved in the delivery of information that should be included in a sex education programme. In some subjects this information is an integral part of their scheme of work. In others it would not be part of their scheme of work but issues may come up and questions asked which would have to be dealt with by the teacher.

In an effort to ensure that all pupils in St. Leonard's receive their basic entitlement in sex education, delivered in a way that is compatible with the maturity of the pupils and with the Catholic ethos of the school, the R.E. and Science departments will be the main vehicle through which the content of the programme will be delivered - all pupils in Years 7 to 11 follow a course in both subjects and the material to be taught is already part of their scheme of work. This basic entitlement delivered through Science and R.E. does not take the place of any work being done in other department.

#### **10. Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy is reviewed annually by the Achievement and Well-Being Committee of the Governing Body. RSE Schemes of Work are reviewed and updated annually by the Heads of Year and are sufficiently flexible to adapt to specific issues as they and when they arise. When reviewing the policy the Governors also seek and take into account the views of pupils, parents and Pastoral Staff.

Heads of Year also audit and review the provision and delivery of Relationships and Sex Education with their monitoring of PSHE.