



RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION POLICY

1. RATIONALE

The rationale of sex education in Saint John Bosco College is guided by the principle that sexual activity can only be correctly understood in the context of loving human relationships, and the sex education programme aims to encourage a Catholic understanding of all loving human relationships, not just those of a sexual nature. Consequently, education in loving human relationships will be known as Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), rather than the more widespread Sex and Relationships Education (SRE).

In Relationships and Sex Education, Saint John Bosco College seeks to be faithful to the aim of its founder, St. John Bosco:

“To enable each pupil to become a good Christian, an honest citizen, able to earn his bread”.

Saint John Bosco College aims to do this by providing an informative and balanced curriculum, faithful to the teaching of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, and inspired by the spiritual insights of St. John Bosco. A programme of study in Relationships and Sex Education is, therefore, a central feature in attaining the mission aims of the school, especially in today’s world where the presentation of matters sexual is pervasive in the media whose values are not consonant with the Christian faith.

As the Church teaches, it is the family which is the primary educator of children, the Church acting in an auxiliary role. However, many parents of children in Catholic schools, not least Saint John Bosco College, rely upon the school – rightly or wrongly – to teach their children in this most important matter of Relationships and Sex Education. It is also a requirement by law that Relationships and Sex Education is taught in all secondary schools.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that “God’s holy gift of sexual intercourse is reserved for the permanent commitment of marriage, expressive of the bond of mutual love and open to God’s gift of new life.” All Relationships and Sex Education in a Catholic school, therefore, must have education for chastity (‘the successful integration of sexuality within the person’) as a key objective. It aims to impart information, skills and attitudes and values in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church to the benefit of the individual and society.

Information:

All pupils of Saint John Bosco College are entitled to clear, relevant information appropriate to their age and development, which is both accurate and faithful to the teaching of the Catholic Church.

The content of RSE aims:

- *to increase knowledge of how bodies work especially around pregnancy, puberty, etc.*
- *to raise awareness of appropriate and inappropriate forms of behaviour in relationships*
- *to raise awareness of the importance of managing emotions*
- *to dispel myths and rumours associated with sex and sexual relationships*
- *to raise awareness of how the media uses sexual images*
- *to increase knowledge of the nature of Christian marriage*
- *to raise awareness of the nature of chastity*

- *to raise awareness of the negative consequences of sexual relationships outside marriage and the impact they can have*
- *to raise awareness of the impact drugs and alcohol can have on sex and sexual relationships*
- *to increase knowledge around natural and artificial contraception and STIs*
- *to raise awareness of the advice and support available for young people*
- *to raise awareness of the effect and impact of prejudice and discrimination*
- *to raise awareness of legal rights in relation to sex and sexual relationships*

Skills:

All pupils of Saint John Bosco College are entitled to learn and practice key life skills which will help them negotiate relationships as safely as possible.

The skills helped to develop within RSE include:

- *communication skills learning to participate effectively, to listen and ask questions, express emotions, challenge and be challenged*
- *decision-making skills; for example, acting on informed choices and assessing risk.*
- *skills for negotiation such as resisting peer pressure and dealing with sexual bullying*
- *gaining skills in developing and maintaining healthy relationships*
- *developing and practising emotional skills; for example, empathy, managing emotions confidently etc.*
- *developing skills to recognise and analyse the use of sex by the media*

Attitudes and values:

By exploring and challenging attitudes and values young people can be helped to develop a positive attitude to sexual health and wellbeing.

This RSE program aims for young people:

- *to explore the link between sex, emotions and relationships and highlight a sense of respect for one's own and other's feelings*
- *to recognise that discrimination, bullying and prejudice are harmful and unacceptable*
- *to develop self-awareness and self-esteem*
- *to explore and discuss the Catholic teaching regarding sex and sexual relationships*
- *to challenge sexual attitudes and values as portrayed by the media and society*
- *to gain an understanding of the range of different social, cultural, ethnic and religious frameworks and their value systems*
- *to raise awareness that reliable information should be sought from adults*
- *to develop a mature and responsible attitude to relationships*

3. RELIGIOUS, MORAL, AND VALUES FRAMEWORK

Pope John Paul II stated that RSE should not be taught in a moral vacuum. The Church teaches clearly the nature of man and woman, the goal of human love, and the depths of human sexuality, and this teaching must be maintained in a Catholic school. As stated in the Archdiocese of Southwark's guidance document *Education in Human Love*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* must be regarded as normative when it comes to faith, morals and values in RSE. The Catechism states:

"God created man and woman in his own image, with equal dignity, different yet complementary. Our sexuality is a gift from God, and must be expressed according to his will of love. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and we are one body with Christ. Chastity should be presented in a positive way: it is a gift from God, leading to a self-control which frees us to behave towards ourselves and others with love and with justice. God's holy gift of sexual intercourse is reserved for the permanent commitment of marriage, expressive of the bond of mutual love and open to God's gift of new life." (para. 2331-2400, 2514-2533) "Genuine love is the fundamental vocation of every human being." (para. 2392)

This teaching forms the foundation of the religious, moral, and values framework for RSE in Saint John Bosco College. It is not the role of the school, however, to simply proscribe certain moral values and sexual activities that are accepted or promoted in society. The Church's teaching on human relationships and sexuality must be

presented gradually and positively at a suitable stage in young people's personal, social and sexual development, encouraging them to understand the reasons behind the Church's teaching through careful consideration and reflection.

RSE will teach pupils the nature and importance of love within families, friendships and sexual relationships; it will encourage them to value everybody – regardless of gender, faith, or sexual orientation – as being created in the image of God and deserving of respect; it will give them the opportunity to reflect on God's plan for sexual intercourse, and the importance of self-control; it will encourage them to consider lifelong marriage between a man and a woman as the environment in which to raise children, and the risks associated with sexual activities outside this framework; it will also give them opportunities to consider the Church's teaching on contraception and the true meaning and purpose of the sexual act.

4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that St John Bosco College strives to do the best for all of the pupils and will deliver the RSE programme to them, 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.

RSE must be delivered sensitively, especially with regards to diverse faith backgrounds and sexual orientation. All points of view must be respected, and bullying of any kind within RSE lessons must be treated seriously and reported through the correct channels. The Catholic Church's teaching on heterosexual marriage as the only environment in which sexual intercourse should take place must not be used as an opportunity to encourage homophobic attitudes and behaviours. As the Catechism states:

“The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.” (para. 2358)

The RSE programme at times deals with highly emotive issues, but in the midst of discussions and reflections with pupils on various attitudes towards relationships and sex, the teachings of the Church, as found in Holy Scripture and Tradition, must always be explained reasonably and with charity.

5. INCLUSION AND SEN

Saint John Bosco College aims to deliver its Relationships and Sex Education programme to all pupils regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation, and physical or academic ability.

6. ORGANISATION OF RSE

The Relationships and Sex Education programme will be delivered by subject teachers where it falls within the National Curriculum programmes of study and through the RE, science and PSHE programmes where appropriate. Outside agencies will often be used within RE, PSHE and Citizenship, utilizing the expertise of professionals who are aware of the Catholic ethos of Saint John Bosco College's RSE programme.

7. TEACHING STRATEGIES

Guidance on teaching strategies within RSE are set out in the DfEE document *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance* (0116/2000) which can be found in the appendix of this RSE Policy. The key teaching strategies are set out in the document as:

- establishing ground rules;
- using distancing techniques;
- knowing how to deal with unexpected questions or comments from pupils;
- using discussion and project learning methods and appropriate materials; and
- encouraging reflection.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

Pupil safety and welfare is of primary importance at Saint John Bosco College, and all staff – especially those who are responsible for delivering the RSE programme – should be aware of the policies, laws and procedures that are in place to ensure that any concerns regarding pupils are raised promptly and through the correct channels. The purpose of confidentiality within RSE is to reassure pupils that the policy is in their best interests; to encourage them to speak to their parents or carers wherever possible about their concerns; to make them aware that:

- pupils must be made aware that no member of staff can offer or guarantee them absolute confidentiality;
- the trusted adult to whom pupils should talk about relationships and sex in confidence should always be their parent or carer;
- in RSE pupils will be encouraged and supported in talking to their parents or carers about their concerns regarding relationships and sex;
- RSE ground rules should be enforced to discourage inappropriate disclosures by pupils;
- ‘distancing’ teaching strategies should be used and maintained by teachers in RSE to help create a safe environment in which pupils can consider relationships and sex without feeling the pressure to disclose personal information;
- if a pupil does disclose sexual activity or specific concerns to a teacher at an inappropriate time then that teacher should talk again with that pupil by the end of the day. Without giving the pupils’ name, that teacher may discuss the issue with an appropriate colleague; the pupil should be persuaded, if possible, to talk with their parent or carer;
- any disclosures that signal a possibility of sexual abuse must be reported immediately to the school’s member of staff responsible for child protection: at Saint John Bosco College this is Ms Maria Bud, Designated Person for Safeguarding.
- if a personal disclosure is made to a member of staff, and confidentiality has to be broken, then the pupil must be informed first, and supported by the school;
- unless there are exceptional circumstances, parents or carers will be informed if a personal disclosure is made of underage sexual activity, or if there is a possibility of sexual abuse;
- pupils should be informed that there are sources of confidential help such as the school nurse, their GP, or a young person’s sexual health clinic;
- parents should be aware that the school nurse can direct pupils to a young person’s sexual health clinic where contraceptives can be dispensed to underage pupils in confidence but will always advise abstinence;

9. LEGALITY

The following statement about the statutory nature of RSE is taken from the Archdiocese of Southwark’s *Diocesan Policy for Education in Human Love*:

The law requires that maintained secondary schools teach sex education, human growth and reproduction including education about HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases as set out in the National Curriculum. It also requires that the LEA, governing body and headteacher make sure that sex education is provided in a way that encourages pupils to consider morals and the value of family life.

Statutory requirements for the Science curriculum include:

- By the end of Key Stage 3, young people are expected to know “that fertilisation in humans... is the fusion of a male and female cell; about the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence; about the human reproductive system, including the menstrual cycle and fertilisation; how the foetus develops in the uterus; how the growth and reproduction of bacteria and the replication of viruses can affect health”.
- By the end of Key Stage 4 young people are expected to understand “the way

in which hormonal control occurs, including the effects of sex hormones; some medical uses of hormones, including the control and promotion of fertility; the defence mechanisms of the body; how sex is determined in humans”.

The governing body of every secondary school must make and keep up-to-date a separate written statement of their policy with regard to the provision of sex education and to make copies of it available to parents.

In both primary and secondary schools, parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided, except the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction required under National Curriculum science.

The Diocese strongly recommends that Sex and Relationship Education is taught in both primary and secondary schools, so that pupils will be able to learn about the Church’s teaching on all these areas and encouraged to develop healthy attitudes and an understanding of the essential goodness and holiness of God’s creation.

Reviewed June 2017

Next Review

Signed (Chair of Governors).....