



RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION POLICY

March 2025

1. RATIONALE

The rationale of sex education in St John Bosco College is guided by the principle that sexual activity can only be correctly understood in the context of loving human relationships. 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), as outlined by the DfE in 2019.

In Relationships and Sex Education, St 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”.

St 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 online and in the media and 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 St 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 DfE guidance for a successful RSE policy in secondary education states the aim is for students to “To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, students need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy”. 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 students of St 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.

During secondary school education, all students will continue to develop on the following topics covered in primary school:

- *Families and people who care for me*
- *Caring friendships*
- *Respectful relationships*
- *Online relationships*
- *Being safe*



At the time of leaving secondary school, all students will be made aware of the following:

- *Families*
- *Respectful relationships, including friendships*
- *Online and media*
- *Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health*

Additionally, students will be taught an understanding of physical health and mental wellbeing:

- *Mental health and wellbeing*
- *Internet safety and harms*
- *Physical health and fitness*
- *Healthy eating*
- *Drugs, alcohol, and tobacco*
- *Health and prevention*
- *Basic first aid*
- *Changing adolescent body*

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*
- *the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality*
- *to raise awareness of the concepts of laws and legal rights in relation to sex and sexual relationships*
- *to raise awareness of online risks in particular of sharing personal information online*

Skills:

All students of St 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 health, sexual health and wellbeing.



This RSE program aims for young people:

- 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 explore the link between sex, emotions and relationships and highlight a sense of respect for one's own and other's feelings
- 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

In a Catholic school any teaching or formation on human love and human development must be within the whole context of our faith in God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ, as it is through our love of God and of neighbour that we reciprocate God's love for mankind. As the term 'Relationship and Sex Education' indicates, the emphasis is placed on the understanding and formation of respectful, loving relationships which exist between friends and within families. 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 St 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 students 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 students 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 students 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

St John Bosco College aims to deliver its Relationships and Sex Education programme to all students 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, PE and ICT programmes where appropriate. Outside agencies will often be used utilizing the expertise of professionals who are aware of the Catholic ethos of St John Bosco College’s RSE programme. As highlighted in the Archdiocese of Southwark Education in Human Love states:

“Sex education should provide information while keeping in mind that children and young people have not yet attained full maturity. The information has to come at a proper time and in a way suited to their age”.

Therefore, all topics will be delivered through vertical tutoring system, otherwise at age-appropriate levels through year group workshops when necessary. Some aspects may be delivered through age-appropriate subject curriculum areas such as science and RE.

7. TEACHING STRATEGIES

Guidance on teaching strategies within RSE were set out in the DfE document *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (0116/2000)*. 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 students;
- using discussion and project learning methods and appropriate materials; and
- encouraging reflection.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

Students’ safety and welfare is of primary importance at St 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 students are raised promptly and through the correct channels. The purpose of confidentiality within RSE is to reassure students 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:

- students must be made aware that no member of staff can offer or guarantee them absolute confidentiality;
- the trusted adult to whom students should talk about relationships and sex in confidence should always be their parent or carer;
- in RSE students 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 students.



- 'distancing' teaching strategies should be used and maintained by teachers in RSE to help create a safe environment in which students 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 student's name, that teacher may discuss the issue with an appropriate colleague; the student 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 Safeguarding Team. The Senior Staff member responsible for child protection: at St 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;
- students 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 students to a young person's sexual health clinic where contraceptives can be dispensed to underage students
- 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*:

As of September 2020, it is expected that all schools in England will meet the statutory requirements for RSE as set-out by the Department for Education (DfE). In addition, there are further statutory requirements relating to RSE pertinent to legislation covering different parts of United Kingdom. They can be summarised as follows:

- All maintained primary and secondary schools must teach the Sex Education and Health Education elements of the National Curriculum Science Order;
- All secondary schools must provide RSE as part of the basic curriculum, including as a minimum education about HIV, AIDS and STIs and the national curriculum content about human growth and reproduction (Health Education is also part of the legislation for maintained schools and academies and included in the Independent Schools Inspections framework);
- In all primary schools, Relationships Education is now compulsory. There are also statutory elements for Relationships Education within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Sex Education is not compulsory in primary schools, but is recommended to be taught.
- All schools must have an up to date RSE policy which is made available to parents and others. Schools must provide a copy of the policy free of charge to anyone who asks for one and should publish the policy on the school website;
- Parents right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of Sex Education delivered as part of statutory RSE is preserved within the guidance. The DfE statutory guidelines permits children to opt into Sex Education from three terms before their 16th birthday