

## *Education in Human Love* *Relationships and Sex Education Policy*

### **PRINCIPLES**

Marymount International School is dedicated to the harmonious growth of the whole person through each individual's physical, emotional, intellectual, social, moral and spiritual development. This includes educating students to develop healthy and positive relationships. The PSHEE curriculum has been created to include units that are age appropriate in regards to healthy relationships and are aligned with the Catholic ethos and values of the School.

Relationship and Sex Education requires an integrated holistic approach which respects the fundamental dignity of the individual and the responsibilities of parents and teachers. Through the pastoral and spiritual life of the School, we encourage students to have a healthy sense of self and that, through the belief that each individual is made in the image and likeness of God, they have intrinsic value and respect.

The aim of Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) in a Catholic school is to bring the young person to the point where they can make decisions about their relationships and sexual behaviour which are fully informed, independent and congruent with true Christian values and moral principles.

### **Consultation**

As part of the review of the RSE curriculum the School engaged in a consultation with parents, students, staff and governors. Parents receive a letter providing an outline of the RSE Programme for their daughter's particular Grade. This includes a task for them to complete with their daughter so that they can engage in the learning process. Parents are then given the opportunity to provide feedback to the RSE coordinators (The PSHEE Coordinator and Chair of the Religious Studies Department). The policy and RSE curriculum have been presented to the Spiritual Life Committee for advice and oversight, and also to the Board for ratification. All staff and governors recognise that we have a full and active part to play in preparing our students for responsible decision making within the context of the Catholic faith.

### **Implementation and Review of Policy**

Implementation of the policy will take place after the consultation with the Governors during the November and February Board 2020. This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Headmistress, the RSE Coordinators, the Chair of Science, the Deputy Head (Safeguarding) and Governors. The next review date will be November 2022.

### **Dissemination**

The draft policy will be given to the Board of Governors and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the document and details of the curriculum will be made available to parents through the Student/Parent handbook and is available from the Head's PA. Details of the Policy will also be published on the School's website.

## WHAT IS RELATIONSHIP 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”<sup>1</sup>. It is about the development of the student’s knowledge and understanding of herself and her sexuality, which means to be fully human, called to live in positive relationships with self and others and being enabled to make moral decisions in conscience. The 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).”<sup>2</sup> At Marymount London, this involves adopting attributes of the IB learner Profile so that students become principled and balanced learners, able to hold positive beliefs, values and attitudes consistent with Catholic belief in the context of a Catholic School.

## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Statutory requirements for RSE are set out in the DfE’s guidance booklet entitled ‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Sex and Relationships Education’ (2019).

## RATIONALE

*“I have come that you might have life and have it to the full” (John 10.10)*

At Marymount we are inspired by the RSHM Goal, “That all may have life and have it to the full” (John 10:10) and understand that relationship with the self and with the other is essential for life in community and in enjoying fulfilling relationships. We advocate and explore 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 a 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 relationships 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 PSHEE framework, Religious Studies and Science curricula, as well as the Advisory Programmes, as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and is integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of students. It is centred on Christ’s vision of being human as good news and will be delivered in a manner that is positive and thoughtful, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.

The RSE curriculum will reflect the Church’s moral teaching on the central importance of marriage and family life whilst acknowledging that all students have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from. Students will be supported and enabled to understand and discuss different sets of values sensitively. It will also prepare students for life as global citizens by adopting attributes of the IB Learner Profile so that students become principled and balanced learners, able to hold positive beliefs, values and attitudes whilst understanding that others may hold a differing perspective.

<sup>1</sup> *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*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid, Page 25*

## VALUES AND 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 God's call to love others with a proper respect for their dignity and the dignity of the human body. The Marymount RSE curriculum is centred on the School's Mission that we empower our students to be "firm in faith, vibrant in hope, rooted in love and one in service" and so embody the Christian virtues of faith, hope and love. Through the curriculum, time will be given to an exploration of faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

## AIMS OF RSE

Our Mission commits us to encouraging and affirming personal growth of the whole person (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and RSE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, we aim to raise students' 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 students and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education"<sup>1</sup> which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

## OBJECTIVES

### 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.

<sup>1</sup> *Gravissimum Educationis* 1

**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.

**OUTCOMES****INCLUSION AND DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING**

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual students in respect to students' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example their own sexual orientation, faith or culture and is taught in a way that does not subject students to discrimination. Lessons will also help students 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. (Please see the Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying, School's Equal Opportunities and SENDA Policies).

**EQUALITIES OBLIGATIONS**

The governing body have wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and will ensure that our school strives to do the best for all of the students, 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.

**PARENTS AND CARERS**

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

Therefore the School will support parents and guardians by providing material to be shared with their daughter at home and workshops to help parents to find out more. Parents and guardians will be informed when the more sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their daughter's learning.

Parents must be consulted before this policy is ratified by the governors. They will be consulted at every stage of 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 of the consultation process, every parent and carer will have full confidence in the School's RSE programme to meet their daughter's needs.

Parents continue to have the right to withdraw their children from Sex Education except in those parts that are included in the Science lessons. Should parents wish to withdraw their daughter they are asked to notify the School by contacting the Headteacher. The School will provide support by providing material for parents to help their daughter 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).

## **BALANCED CURRICULUM**

Whilst promoting Catholic values and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that students are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues.

Students will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE, this includes those issues relating to forced-marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion, the age of consent and legislation relating to equality. Knowing about 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 students have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.

## **ORGANISATION AND CONTENT OF RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION**

At Marymount, much of the Relationship and Sex Education takes place within PSHEE, Science and Religious Studies lessons and is also studied through the Advisory Curriculum. Faculty generally deliver the PSHEE Curriculum with support from professionals e.g. School Nurses, Life Coach/Counsellor, Designated Safeguarding Lead where appropriate. The student-teacher relationship that is fostered through the Advisory Programme means that many of the issues that are included in the RSE curriculum are best covered in a familiar and safe environment where students feel comfortable to discuss issues regarding relationships. RSE lessons are set within the wider context of the PSHEE curriculum and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although the physical aspects of puberty and reproduction are also included.

The Science Curriculum is delivered by faculty in the Science department. These lessons are more concerned with the physical aspects of development and reproduction which should be set within discussions around the importance of relationships.

The Religious Studies curriculum is delivered by Religious Studies teachers within the context of Catholic teaching with the aim of looking at relationships and sex from a moral perspective. Here students acquire knowledge and understanding of the Catholic teaching on the human person and sexuality, family life and marriage whilst considering issues where there may be a variety of perspectives.

The RSE Programme is taught through the PSHEE Programme which is taught in Grades 6-12, and the Science Curriculum in Grades 6-10 and through the Religious Studies curriculum, particularly in Grade 9 within the Marriage and Family Life unit.

## **ASSESSMENT**

There is no formal assessment but tests, written assignments, self-reflection and self-evaluation are used to capture progress.

## **STUDENTS QUESTIONS**

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. They want to ensure that students 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 students and young people.

## **Controversial or Sensitive Issues**

Any RSE lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive or controversial. These may be due to levels of maturity, personal experiences, or disagreements with the teaching of the Church, illegality or any harmful activity. Through open debate, discussion and clear direction from the teacher, students should feel empowered to ask and answer questions in a safe environment. Students are best protected from harm or exploitation if issues are discussed openly within the context of the RSE Programme. Before embarking on these lessons ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson. When students ask questions, factual replies will be given within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be

dealt with individually at another time.

Should discussions lead to the disclosure of a safeguarding issue, teachers need to reassure the student and follow the School's safeguarding procedures and inform the DSL as soon as possible. Faculty will need to be aware of the needs of their students and not let fears and worries go unnoticed.

### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE TEACHING THE RSE PROGRAMME**

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lies with the PSHEE Co-ordinator, the Chair of Religious Studies and members of SLT who work with PSHEE, RS and pastoral programmes. They work with Heads of Year and Advisors, as well as with staff nominated from the Science and Religious Studies faculties.

However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE programme. They will be role models for students of good, healthy, wholesome relationships and will also be contributing to the development of students' personal and social skills.

### **EXTERNAL VISITORS**

Our school will often 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 the procedures in place by Marymount for visiting speakers. A risk assessment will be completed and materials requested beforehand to ensure that the information being communicated to students will be worthwhile, informative and cohere with the values and mission of the School.

The Ten Ten Theatre Company deliver an annual workshop to individual Grades from 6-10. RSE themes are explored in a creative and profound way enabling students to ask pertinent questions and critically analyse the information that is presented. Follow up lessons are provided to help support faculty teaching RSE answer questions in a meaningful way that is consistent with Catholic teaching.

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 and liaise with the Deputy Head Safeguarding for advice on any issues which suggests a child is at risk of harm or has been harmed.

### **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 the Diocesan Policy for RSE and other whole school policies, e.g., SENDA, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs;
- Ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children;
- Utilise the Spiritual Life Board Committee to monitor and evaluate the Programme, including resources used;
- Ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant Science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHEE, RS, Science and Advisory curricula.

### **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.

## **PSHEE CO-ORDINATOR AND CHAIR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

The PSHEE co-ordinator, Chair of Religious Studies with the Headmistress and supported by the Deputy Heads, will have a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy. They will provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to RSE and the provision of in-service training.

### **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 students. 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. All staff should be aware of the policy and how it relates to them.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND CURRICULUM SUBJECTS**

This RSE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHEE framework, the Religious Studies and Science curricula. It includes guidelines about student safety and is compatible with the School's other policies on Anti-Bullying, Safeguarding, and Equal Opportunities. Students 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 students.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND ADVICE**

All governors, teachers, support staff, parents and students 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 students 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.

Students will be encouraged to talk to their parents and guardians about the issues which are discussed in the programme. Teachers will always help students facing personal difficulties. Teachers should explain to students that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance. Teachers will explain that in such circumstances they would have to inform others, e.g., DSL but that the students would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

In a case where a teacher learns from any student that they are having or contemplating sexual intercourse or may be pregnant:

- the young person will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to their parent or guardian and if necessary to seek medical advice. This may be at school and facilitated by the Head Teacher, DSL or School Nurse.
- child protection issues will be considered, and referred if necessary to the DSL under the school's procedures.

Health professionals e.g School Nurse and Family Planning Nurses assisting on the RSE programme in school are bound by their codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual student, but in a classroom situation they must follow the School's policy.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION**

It is the responsibility of the PSHEE Co-ordinator, Chair of Religious Studies and Chair of Science to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation of RSE by examining plans, curriculum, and samples of students' work. The RSE programme will be evaluated biennially by means of questionnaires / response sheets/ needs assessment given to students, and / or by discussion with students, staff and parents. The results of the evaluation

should be reported to these groups of interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the Policy.

The Spiritual Life Committee is responsible for overseeing and reviewing the Relationships and Sex Education Policy. This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

Once approved by the Board of Governors, this Policy will be available on the school website.

**RELATED POLICIES:**

*Anti-Bullying Policy*

*Safeguarding Policy*

*Equal Opportunities Policy for Students*

*SENDA Policy*

**Approved:** February 2021  
**To be reviewed:** February 2024