



**ST BERNADETTE'S**  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

# Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RHSE) Policy

St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Approved by BoD: 30/09/2024

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## Mission Statement

At St Bernadette's, we follow Jesus by sharing His light through our words and actions, spreading His word in how we live and learn, trusting His plan even when the path is uncertain, loving one another with compassion and respect, and serving others with humility, just as Christ did. Through these daily acts of faith and kindness, we grow together as a community of disciples.

## Introduction

In our School we believe that education is 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.

Within this context we recognise that the personal, moral and social development of all children including Relationships and Health Education (RHE) is of paramount importance. More than ever do the children in our care need help and guidance to understand their own and others' sexuality in positive ways and to enjoy relationships based on mutual respect, dignity and responsibility free from any abuse. The importance of this subject is shown by the Government making it a statutory subject from September 2020.

As a Catholic School, we aim to provide a curriculum in Relationships and Health Education (RHE) that is authentic to the Catholic Church's teaching and acknowledges each child's stage of physical development.

Relationships and Health Education (RHE) is lifelong learning about physical, moral, social and emotional development. It is the understanding of the importance of marriage and family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. The DFE guidance (2019) defines RHE as

***'To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, children need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy.'***

The guidance defines the focus in primary schools as:

***'Teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships and relationships with other children and adults.'***

## Context

Our ethos is to educate our children with Christ at the centre; therefore, all that we teach is focused upon Catholic values and morals. We recognise each of our children as unique individuals, created in the image and likeness of God and our curriculum reflects the Gospel values of our faith. This is integral to teaching the Christian values, and is taught in the context of Christian relationships and virtues. Education about relationships

and sexuality begins at birth and continues throughout life. RHE promotes children's self-esteem and emotional wellbeing. It helps them to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others, at home, at School and in the community. Our RHE curriculum enables children to understand and value their bodies as well as develop positive attitudes and values towards sexuality. It also supports children in a growing understanding of their gender in order that they should feel comfortable with their own identity and secure in their relationships. 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.

The School shares, with parents/carers, the responsibility to provide positive and prudent relationships and sex education. We believe that it is essential that parents/carers are actively involved and engaged in the teaching of relations to their children.

### **Aims**

Within the context of a Catholic school, our RHE curriculum aims to enable our children to:

- To grow in self- respect and self-worth, recognising that each of us is created in the image and likeness of God;
- To develop an understanding of our relationship with God and one another and how we live our lives to promote loving and meaningful relationships;
- To explore the meaning and value of life, and give some appreciation of the values of family life as it is an important and special gift from God;
- To have some understanding that love is central to and the basis of meaningful relationships;
- To become aware of their own emotions and how to manage them;
- To develop clear understanding of their bodies, including the changes which have taken place since birth and those which will take place in the years ahead;
- To increase their confidence in forming, maintaining and ending relationships;
- To protect themselves from abuse;
- To assess, understand and resist peer and social pressures;
- To develop in themselves a caring and considerate attitudes to both each other and to society;
- To understand the reproductive process in humans and animals, using correct vocabulary for body parts alongside their own terminology;
- To provide a forum where they can share their concerns and offer a climate of support where they know they will be listened to sensitively.

### **Teaching and Learning**

CRC Article 29 (Goals of Education)

***"Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents/carers, their own and other cultures, and the environment."***

Our RHE curriculum is delivered through a whole school scheme of work entitled 'Live Life to the Full' and devised by TenTen, a company specialising in Catholic Education. This is a commercially published scheme, developed with the support of many Catholic Schools and which has been recommended by the Birmingham Diocesan Education Service.

The programme has been designed as a spiral curriculum so that the themes are developed throughout the whole of a child's education at primary school.

The programme comprises of three modules:

- Created & loved by God
- Created to love others
- Created to live in Community

Each module is then broken down into units:

Created & loved by God			Created to love others			Created to live in Community	
Me, my body, my health	Emotional well-being	Life cycles	Religious understanding	Personal relationships	Keeping safe	Religious understanding	Living in the wider world

The modules are covered within each teaching phase (KS1, lower KS2 & Upper KS2) and then repeated in the next phase with age appropriate materials.

Within the compulsory National Curriculum for Science programme of study, the following aspects relating to RHE are included:

At KS1 children are taught:

- That animals including humans move, feed, grow, use of senses and reproduce
- To recognise and compare the main external parts of the body of humans
- That humans can produce babies and that these grow into adults
- To recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others, and
- Treat others with sensitivity.

At KS2 children are taught:

- That the life processes common to humans and other animals include nutrition, growth and reproduction

- About the main stages of the human life cycle

## **Sensitivity**

We will liaise with parents/carers prior to any modules being taught on puberty, showing them the materials that will be used in class and giving them opportunity to discuss any concerns. All materials used will be from 'Live life to the Full' we will be sending parents links to access materials at home and a questionnaire for them to log their views. We are keen to work in partnership so the programme has maximum impact.

At our School we aim to provide accurate factual information about the physical and emotional changes that take place at puberty. Both boys and girls are given a basic knowledge of what happens to each gender. We also explain that it is normal for everyone to develop at different rates.

We provide accurate information about menstruation from Year 5 onwards. This will be taught through the 'Live life to the full' programme. Sensitive arrangements are organised to prepare the girls for teaching about menstruation. Sanitary facilities are available on request. Staff are prepared to deal with requests for sanitary towels in a helpful manner and without embarrassment.

Boys and girls will be taught in same sex groups. Teachers will handle with sensitivity any explicit or difficult questions, such as those regarding equality, gender and sexuality. They need not be answered directly and can be answered individually later or referred to the parents/carers. All teaching in relation to sexuality, personal responsibility and the dignity of the individual, will be encompassed within the moral framework, spirituality and teaching of the Catholic Church.

## **Inclusion**

Christ's command 'Love one another as I have loved you', is the key and foundation for human and spiritual fulfilment and happiness. We will ensure RHE sessions are sensitive to the different needs of individual children in respect to childrens' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances.

Such sessions will also help children to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyberbullying), use of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help.

Children may have varying needs regarding RHE depending on their circumstances and background. The School strongly believes that all children should have access to relationships and sex education that is relevant to their particular needs.

Different ethnic and cultural groups may have different attitudes to RHE. The School will consult with all children and parents/carers about their needs, take account of their views and promote respect for, and understanding of, the views of different ethnic and cultural groups.

We recognise that our children may come from a variety of family situations and home backgrounds. We shall take care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances.

Our approach to such education will include sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexuality. We shall take account of the fact that some children may have learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties or physical disabilities that result in particular RHE needs. We have a commitment to ensuring that all pupils will have equal access to the RHE curriculum, following guidelines in the SEND, Equal Opportunities and Inclusion policies.

In considering aspects of RHE our School will pay full regard to guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2022). This Policy should be read in conjunction with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from Health Education modules as this is a statutory requirement. However, they do have the right to withdraw their children from modules that cover sex education, except for those parts included in the National Curriculum Science programmes of study. In such cases, parents/carers must notify the School. The Head Teacher will then have a meeting with parents/carers to discuss the matter further. Where relevant, parent/carers' meetings will be held prior to any potentially sensitive RHE curriculum content being delivered.

### **Confidentiality**

Some children may choose to mention specific problems or individual issues involving themselves or members of the School Community. While staff will want to be supportive, it is made clear to all staff they work within child protection guidelines (see Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy) and therefore must state to their children that they may not be able to guarantee confidentiality when the well-being and safety of a child may be at risk.

**Finally**, as Pope John Paul wrote in *Familiaris Consortio*:

***'Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it.'***