



"The glory of God is
a human being fully alive!"



ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC **HIGH SCHOOL**

SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

Date of Review: September 2025
Next Review: September 2026

A registered charitable Company limited by guarantee (number 10435919)
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INTRODUCTION

It is the policy of St Joseph's that all pupils receive a comprehensive and structured course of education in physical development, personal relationships and family life, including where appropriate areas of sexual knowledge. In designing this programme, we have carefully considered the ethos of our Catholic School, the Teaching of the Catholic Church and the needs of our pupils, whatever their ability, age or stage of development.

Education in relationship and sexual matters can be viewed as an integral part of the formation of an individual's total personality. It endeavours to play a significant part in fulfilling the pupils' entitlement to spiritual, physical, mental, moral, cultural and environmental development and to set this in a Christian context.

The aim is to help pupils to develop a profound self-respect based on their unique value and dignity as persons. We focus positively on the development of self-esteem and an understanding of the worth and needs of others. In the light of society today we believe it right and proper to alert pupils to the realities of the society we live in and the problems they will face on their journey to adulthood.

At St Joseph's we are not attempting to replace the parents' role in sex and relationships education, indeed sex and relationships education at home and at school should complement and enhance each other. However, school is able to offer some facilities and expertise that may not be available in the family. School can take into account at the same time, variations in terms of family background and differing experiences, ensuring equality of opportunity. The work undertaken in the school setting will only be a reinforcement of the ongoing support of home and will only succeed through the co-operation of parents, staff, pupils and various support agencies on whom we will call for help at times. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from sex and relationships Education lessons.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this programme is to -

1. Impart necessary factual knowledge
2. Improve problem solving and decision making skills
3. Provide opportunities to clarify attitudes and values, in the areas of physical development, personal relationships and family life. Through the development of these three areas we seek to provide a basis for responsible, healthy behaviour and reasoned Catholic responses to the pressures of modern society.

Objectives for the course in sex and relationships education are:

- to maintain the RC teaching that human love is a precious gift that enriches the personality;
- to develop a Christian conscience;
- to increase self-discipline and develop self-control;
- to challenge the pupils to become more morally aware;
- to develop self-confidence and self-esteem, so that they recognise their own self-worth;
- to understand the importance of family life and friendship;
- to promote proper expression of friendship;

- to develop coping skills to resolve conflict in relationships;
- to prepare pupils for marriage;
- to help pupils to develop a mature attitude to sexual issues and to be at ease with their own sexuality and the physical and emotional changes of adolescence;
- to promote a responsible attitude towards sexual behaviour;
- to promote knowledge and understanding, as well as the development of attitudes and skills about a range of matters associated with sex and sexuality;
- to help pupils to respond to the challenge of the world they live in, in the light of Christian teaching.
- to make pupils aware of changes in the law surrounding protected characteristics such as gender identity and sexuality.

Sex and Relationships Education:

From September 2020 the Department for Education has made Sex and Relationships education compulsory across all secondary schools. Under the statutory guidance topics that should have been covered by the end of secondary school included:

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

As part of the statutory guidance it states that it is also important that pupils are aware of the law surrounding sex and relationships as well as broader safeguarding issues. This extends to consent, violence and abuse, online behaviours including image and information sharing, pornography, sexuality, extremism/radicalisation, hate crime, criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drug operations), hate crime and female genital mutilation (FGM).

At St. Joseph's there is a cross curricular approach to teaching sex and relationships education with topics covered in Science, Religious Education, Child Development (KS4 only) and PSHE. Resources used for teaching are differentiated and age appropriate across the key stages. For full details of curriculum content and year group specific topics in each subject area please refer to the school website where you will find each subjects curriculum plan published under the curriculum tab.

Safe and effective practice including safeguarding

We will ensure a safe learning environment for all pupils by ensuring teachers adhere to the guidelines set out in our behaviour policy. Pupils will be given the opportunity to ask questions about the various topics covered in class and any queries will be answered in line with the aims set out in this policy. Sensitive issues will be handled with the upmost care and in line with the ethos of the school.

Teachers are aware that effective sex and relationship education which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationships, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. All staff are fully aware of the schools procedure for dealing with a disclosure as outlined in the safeguarding policy and will refer any such issues to the designated safeguarding lead.

Any visitors/external agencies which support the delivery of sex and relationship education will also be subject to the schools safeguarding guidelines and will be subjected to all reasonable vetting procedures and Disclosure Barring Service checks.

The right to withdraw pupils from Sex Education

Under the new guidelines for September 2020 the Department of Education has put in place new guidance on the right to withdraw from sex education. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from any of the sex education aspects of the PSHE programme. Any request to withdraw from sex education must be put in writing and addressed to the head teacher for consideration.

Pupils cannot be withdrawn from any of the relationship or health aspects of education as this is seen as an important part of the curriculum and all pupils should be given access to topics surrounding staying safe and healthy relationships etc. The science curriculum contains topics on human development including reproduction which there is no right to withdraw from.

Pupils will also have the right to opt back in to sex education without their parents' consent from three school terms before their sixteenth birthday if they would like to. The school has an obligation to provide sex education for any pupils this may affect. This change has been reflected in the planning of the school's PSHE curriculum. For more information on the finer details of curriculum content please refer to the school website where the curriculum for PSHE is published under the curriculum tab.