



MARICOURT
CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL
& SIXTH FORM CENTRE

RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Mission Statement

Our Maricourt family, with Christ at the centre, is a community of welcome, compassion and respect in which we are encouraged to discover our true purpose and empowered to achieve the extraordinary so as to be the change we want to see in our world.

INSPIRE
WITH
MARICOURT

Policy Review Date: Sept 2022
Scheduled Review: Sept 2023

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The Policy

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions about relationships and sex education (RSE). We set out our rationale for and approach to relationships and sex education in the school.

Stakeholders

The following groups have been consulted in the process of reviewing the curriculum and provision for RSE:

- school council – Spring 2021
- parents / carers – Summer 2021
- curriculum leaders via curriculum audit – Summer and Autumn 2021
- school nurse and other external agencies – Ten Ten (ongoing), Talk the Talk Summer 2021, Autumn 2021, Autumn 2022
- school governors

Implementation and Review of Policy

Full implementation of the policy took place in summer 2021 in line with Guidance from the Department for Education. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head teacher, RSE steering group, the Governing Body and Staff. The next review date is Summer 2023.

Dissemination

The policy will be made available to all staff members and governors. It will be available to view on the policy section of the staff drive and to parents via the website. A curriculum map of topics covered in RSHE will be produced and made available on the school website.

Defining 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.”¹ It is about the development of the pupils’ knowledge and understanding of her or himself as a sexual being, about what it means to be fully human, called to live in right relationships with self and others and being enabled to make moral decisions in conscience. At Maricourt we believe our role is to support parents and carers in the education of young people in these matters. It is our aim that through the teaching of RSE pupils have a sound understanding of their dignity as an individual and can appreciate and respect the dignity of others in nurturing relationships of all kinds.

Statutory Curriculum Requirements

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSE which are statutory parts of

¹ 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.

National Curriculum Science. In addition, the Relations Education, Relationships and Sex and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make RSE compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education.

However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further.

Rationale

**“God is love and anyone who loves in love lives in God and God lives in him”
1 John 4:16**

Canon Law 795: “Since true education must strive for complete formation of the human person that looks to his or her final end as well as to the common good of societies, children and youth are to be nurtured in such a way that they are able to develop their physical, moral, and intellectual talents harmoniously, acquire a more perfect sense of responsibility and right use of freedom, and are formed to participate actively in social life.”

At Maricourt, we believe in the unique dignity of all persons made in the image and likeness of God; this belief underpins all aspects of learning in our school. Our approach therefore is rooted in the Church’s teaching and is taught within the framework of Christian moral ideas. We believe that relationships education must come before sex education as the former should frame the teaching of the latter.

RSE will be firstly embedded in the PSHE framework as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils. All RSE will be in accordance with the Church’s moral teaching. It will emphasise the central importance of marriage and the family whilst acknowledging that all pupils have a fundamental right to have their life respected whatever household they come from and support will be provided to help pupils deal with different sets of values.

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 following virtues will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

Aim of RSE and the Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, our school aims state that we will

endeavour to raise pupils' 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 children and young people with a “positive and prudent sexual education”² 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.

To **know and understand**:

- The Church's teaching on relationships and the nature and meaning of

² *Gravissimum Educationis* 1

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 pupils in respect to pupils' 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 pupils to discrimination. Lessons will also help children 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.

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 pupils, 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.

Broad Content of RSE

Three aspects of RSE - attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills will be provided in three inter-related ways: the whole school / ethos dimension; a cross curricular dimension and a specific relationships and sex curriculum.

Programme/Resources

Appendices to this policy provide further information about the programme and resources used: Our whole school audit outlining coverage across departments and Key Stages and RSE Scheme of Work delivered through the Religious Education Department to Year 9 pupils (Spring Term 2).

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules

- distancing techniques
- discussion
- project learning
- reflection
- experiential
- active
- brainstorming
- film & video
- group work
- role-play
- trigger drawings
- values clarification

Pupils' learning will be assessed using a variety of methods including self, peer and teacher assessment. Questionnaires, hands-up surveys etc. will also help to measure impact.

Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents (and other carers who stand in their place) are the primary educators of their children. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children. Therefore, the school will support parents and carers by providing material to be shared with their children at home and workshops to help parents/carers to find out more.

Parents will 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. 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 child's needs.

Parents/Carers **have the right to request that their child be withdrawn** from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE, except elements which are required by the National Curriculum for Science. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships or Health Education. Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the Headteacher. Whilst acknowledging a parent's right to withdraw their child from elements of sex education, we believe that the controlled environment of the classroom is the safest place for this curriculum to be followed.

Balanced Curriculum

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. Pupils will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law

pertaining to RSE. 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 pupils have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.

Responsibility for teaching the programme

Responsibility for the specific relationships and sex education programme lies with the RE and Science departments and all teachers of PSHEE. However, all staff will be involved in developing the attitudes and values aspect of the RSE programme. They will be role models for pupils of good, healthy, wholesome relationships as between staff, other adults and pupils.

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 our code of practice developed in line with CES guidance 'Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools' (Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools, CES, Feb. 2011)

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.

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 other whole school policies, e.g., SEN, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs.
- Ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children.
- Establish a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used.
- Ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHE.

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, also appropriate agencies.

PSHEE/RSE Co-ordinators

The co-ordinator with the head teacher has a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to RSE and the provision of in-service training. (They may be supported by the curriculum deputy and the member of staff with responsibility for child protection).

All Staff

RSE is a whole school issue. At Maricourt, we live out the Gospel values shared in the Beatitudes, throughout the life of the school. This is evident in the way in which staff model Gospel values and virtues and encourage pupils to do the same. Through their day-to-day dealings with pupils, staff insist on high expectations of standards and behaviour. Pastoral Leaders set out the high expectations we hold at Maricourt through their leadership of form tutors, assemblies and communication with students and parents. Pastoral Leaders will liaise with the PSHEE/RSE coordinators to ensure any issues of current concern are raised and appropriate interventions are planned (for example if there is an issue with cyberbullying, then the key messages are re-iterated to pupils or schemes of learning altered to deliver a unit earlier).

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.

Chaplaincy

The school chaplain supports staff and pupils through providing resources for daily acts of collective worship that encourages pupils to express what they believe about God in an atmosphere that is free from criticism. Collective worship will always integrate the following key elements of the RSE curriculum;

- Knowing our sacred dignity and value as human persons in the eyes of God
- Positive Mental Health and Body Image
- Respect for LGBTQ+ people
- Catholic Social Teaching
- Relationships and Bullying
- Online safety and prudent use of social media
- Rights and responsibilities as a Christian

Through the work of all staff in form time, assemblies and lessons pupils are encouraged to show love and care for themselves and others. This work alongside teaching through the curriculum allows pupils to explain the choices that they make with reference to conscience and a moral framework.

The school chaplain will work alongside the RSE co-ordinator in formulating the Catholic aspects of the policy within the Maricourt context, and is prepared to deliver aspects of the course to single-sex and mixed-sex audiences where appropriate.

Relationship to other policies and curriculum subjects

This RSE policy is to be delivered as part of the PSHEE framework as well as the RE, Science and PE curriculum. It includes guidelines about pupil safety and is compatible with the school's other policy documents (for example, Bullying Policy, Safeguarding Policy etc.)

Pupils 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 pupils.

Learning about RSE in PSHEE classes will link to/complement learning in those areas identified in the RSE audit.

Children's questions

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. They want to ensure that pupils 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 children and young people. Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting. Many teachers are concerned about responding to unexpected questions or comments from pupils in a whole class situation. Having a set of ground rules should reduce the chances of this happening but teachers will need support and training so that they are prepared for the unexpected.

Controversial or Sensitive issues

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE. These may be matter of maturity, of personal involvement or experience of children, of disagreement with the official teaching of the Church, of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious or harmful activity. The governors believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, e.g., where a child or young person's questions hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature. Questions asked by pupils that are a cause for concern for the teacher should be addressed in accordance with Maricourt's Safeguarding Policy.

Sensitive subjects always need to be framed so that the pupils who are participating know that there is pastoral support if any of the issues discussed make them feel the need to talk further or share confidential information. This should always be done within the safeguarding policy and procedures of the school and it is paramount that all staff teaching RSE have up to date safeguarding professional development. Pastoral Leaders and the Chaplain should be made aware of the planned delivery of sensitive topics.

Supporting children and young people who are at risk

Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place. Effective RSE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue. Teachers will need to be aware of the needs of their pupils and not let any fears and worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects that a child or young person is a victim of or is at risk of abuse they are required to follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible.

Confidentiality and advice

All governors, all teachers, all support staff, all parents and all pupils 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 pupils 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.

Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers about the issues which are discussed in the programme. Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties, in line with the school's pastoral care policy. Teachers should explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance. Teachers will explain that in such circumstance they would

have to inform others, e.g., parents, head teacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken.

Monitoring and evaluation

The RSE Co-ordinator will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of pupils work at regular intervals. The programme will be evaluated biannually by means of questionnaires / response sheets/needs assessment given to pupils, and / or by discussion with pupils, staff and parents. The results of the evaluation should be reported to these groups of interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.