

**Education  
Commission**  
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK



Archdiocese of Southwark

# Education in Human Love

## Diocesan Policy for Relationship & Sex Education

June 2016

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## Preamble to the Policy

This policy has been developed to assist schools in the Archdiocese of Southwark in the creation of their own Relationship and Sex Education Policies. The document has been developed by the Religious Education Advisory team with input from the Relationship and Sex Education Working Party, the Education Commission and the Diocesan Youth Executive Board. Governing Bodies in Catholic schools within the Archdiocese of Southwark may use this policy as a basis for their own Relationship and Sex Education policy. All policies and guidance are reviewed on a three-yearly cycle or earlier if necessary.

### 1. Introduction

*“The Second Vatican Council spoke of the need for “a positive and prudent sex education” to be imparted to children and adolescents “as they grow older,” with “due weight being given to the advances in the psychological, pedagogical and didactic sciences.” ... It can only be seen within the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving. In such a way, the language of sexuality would not be sadly impoverished but illuminated and enriched. The sexual urge can be directed through a process of growth in self-knowledge and self-control capable of nurturing valuable capacities for joy and for loving encounter.”<sup>1</sup>*

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’ (RSE) indicates, the emphasis is placed on the understanding and formation of respectful, loving relationships which exist between friends and within families.

Marriage is one such loving relationship. The Church’s sacramental understanding of marriage explains how we can meet Christ through the adventure of learning to love one another. Pope Francis tells us that “Christian marriage is a sign of how much Christ loved his Church in the covenant sealed on the cross, yet it also makes that love present in the communion of spouses”<sup>2</sup> He then explains that “the sacrament of marriage flows from the incarnation and the paschal mystery, whereby God showed the fullness of his love for humanity by becoming one with us.”<sup>3</sup>

Marriage is a mutual commitment of total fidelity which is open to the gift of life. Understanding how relationships work and developing relationship skills gives a context for understanding human sexuality and sexual health. This is consistent with the Church’s view that the purpose of RSE is to secure “an adequate knowledge of the nature and importance of sexuality and of the harmonious and integral development of the person towards psychological maturity, with full spiritual maturity in view, to which all believers are called.”<sup>4</sup>

Reference will also be made to ‘Sex and Relationship Education’ (SRE) where connections are made to documents from Government and other sources. The Department for Education (DfE) have a similar interpretation in their guidance documents, which state that SRE is “lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about understanding the

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<sup>1</sup> Libreria Editrice Vatican Amoris Laetitia: The Joy of Love (19<sup>th</sup> March 2016) paragraph 280 with reference to Vatican 2, *Gravissimum Educationis* paragraph (28<sup>th</sup> October 1965)

<sup>2</sup> Libreria Editrice Vatican Amoris Laetitia: The Joy of Love (19<sup>th</sup> March 2016) paragraph 73

<sup>3</sup> Libreria Editrice Vatican Amoris Laetitia: The Joy of Love (19<sup>th</sup> March 2016) paragraph 74

<sup>4</sup> The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educational Guidance in Human Love* (1<sup>st</sup> November, 1983) paragraph 34

importance of marriage and family life, stable loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health.”<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Legal requirements

The statutory requirements relating to SRE are contained within different parts of United Kingdom legislation. They can be summarised as follows.

- All maintained primary and secondary schools must teach the SRE elements of the National Curriculum Science Order.
- All maintained secondary schools must provide SRE 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.
- In the primary phase SRE is currently optional in Key Stages One and Two. There are statutory elements in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- All maintained primary and secondary schools must have an up to date policy for SRE, even if the policy (in the primary phase) is not to provide such a programme.
- Parents have a right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex education provided, but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction as required by the National Curriculum Science Order.
- When providing SRE all schools must have regard for the *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance* published in 2000.<sup>6</sup>

Fuller details are given in the Appendix.

There continues to be discussion within Government and in Parliament on SRE. Further legislation may make SRE compulsory at all Key Stages.

Although legislation currently allows Governing Bodies in primary schools to have a policy of not teaching RSE, it is the Diocesan view that RSE is an important part of the partnership between parents and schools. Age appropriate RSE should be part of the curriculum in all schools (primary and secondary, academy or voluntary aided) in the Archdiocese of Southwark.

## 3. Roles

### 3.1 PARENT

*“Sex education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must always be carried out under their attentive guidance, whether at home or in educational centres chosen and controlled by them. In this regard, the Church reaffirms the law of subsidiarity, which the*

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<sup>5</sup> DfE *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance* 0116/2000 paragraph 9, page 5. (July 2000)

<sup>6</sup> *Sex and Relationships Guidance*, 0116/2000, Department for Education & Employment, July 2000

*school is bound to observe when it cooperates in sex education, by entering into the same spirit that animates the parents<sup>17</sup>.*

The Church recognises that parents are the first teachers of their children. It is their right and responsibility to inform and educate their children in matters relating to human relationships and sexual development. Catholic schools help parents in this task and seek to work in partnership with them. Parents are consulted whenever the school's RSE policy is reviewed. They are given the opportunity to discuss the content of any programme of RSE that will be delivered and resources that are planned to be used.

Details about the parental right to withdraw from some aspects of RSE are detailed in the Appendix on page 7.

### 3.2 GOVERNORS

The 1996 Education Act places responsibility for the school's policy on RSE in the hands of the Governing Body. They are required to ensure that there is an up to date RSE policy that is available for parents to read and that the policy is consistent with other relevant whole school policies (e.g. SEND; Safeguarding; Anti-Bullying; Pastoral Care). Foundation Governors are appointed by the Archbishop to promote and safeguard the Catholic character of the school. They have a particular responsibility to ensure that the RSE policy for the school complies with Diocesan policy, directives, and guidance regarding RSE.

### 3.3 HEADTEACHERS

Responsibility for the implementation of the RSE policy is delegated to the Headteacher, in liaison with the governors, parents, Diocesan Education Commission and the Local Authority. It is the task of the Headteacher to integrate RSE into the curriculum.

### 3.4 RSE LEADER/COORDINATOR

An appropriately trained RSE Leader/Coordinator may be appointed to oversee curriculum planning, Continuing Professional Development, training and support for teachers. With governors and the Headteacher, this person should ensure that there is a planned process for informing parents about RSE in the school. Elements of RSE will be delivered in different curricula areas. One element of good practice is to establish a cross curricula liaison group to support the RSE Leader/Coordinator.

### 3.5 TEACHERS AND OTHER ADULTS

Relationship and Sex Education is a whole school issue. All staff are involved in developing the personal and social skills that contribute to human flourishing. As well as delivering curriculum content in the classroom, staff are also role models around the school, giving examples of conflict resolution and establishing relationships of mutual trust and respect. All staff have a responsibility of care and safeguarding of pupils. They should actively contribute to guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of their pupils. This work must be in line with the school's Catholic ethos and current legislation.

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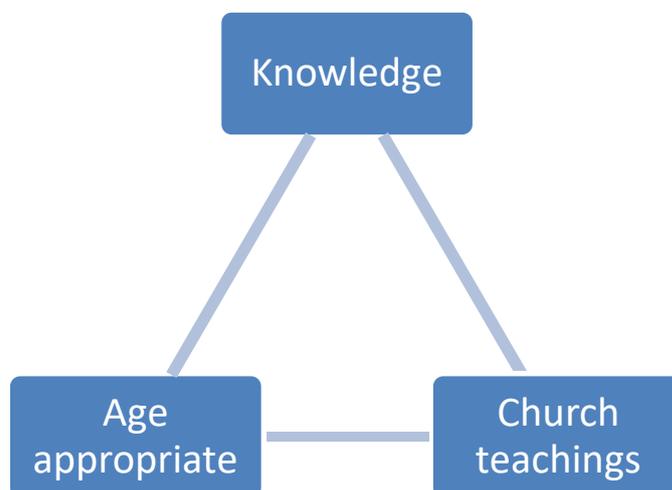
<sup>7</sup> Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, paragraph 43, (1995)

#### 4. The Aim of Relationship and Sex Education in Catholic Schools

*“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.”<sup>8</sup>*

To provide children and young people with a “positive and prudent sexual education”<sup>9</sup> which is compatible with their physical and psychological maturity. Effective RSE in Catholic schools must be designed around three cornerstone principles, namely that:

1. Pupils need clear, accurate and sound knowledge
2. Church teachings are presented in a forthright and clear manner, using the specific references provided by the Church
3. In presentation of both knowledge and Church teachings, age appropriateness and the awareness of child development is key. Instruction should match the child’s developmental level and, as with all learning, be aware of individual differences.



#### 5. The Objectives of Relationships and Sex Education in Catholic Schools

- To provide children and young people with a knowledge and understanding of the Church’s teaching on relationships and sexual love
- To provide children and young people with a positive understanding of what constitutes good, loving relationships
- To provide children and young people with a knowledge and understanding of the biological facts about human reproduction
- To provide children and young people with the skills and confidence to defend themselves against unwanted pressures to be sexually active and to keep them safe

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<sup>8</sup> Libreria Editrice Vatican Amoris Laetitia: The Joy of Love (19<sup>th</sup> March 2016) paragraph 281

<sup>9</sup> *Gravissimum Educationis* 1

- To provide children and young people with an understanding of sexual health including how to protect themselves against unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- To provide children with a clear understanding of the Catholic Church's teaching on contraception and the Catholic Church's teaching to refrain from sexual intercourse outside marriage

## 6. Choosing and using resources, working with external speakers

Relationship and Sex Education must be in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church. It is the responsibility of the Governing Body, working with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team, to ensure that this is achieved through careful monitoring of the teaching resources used. In considering the resources which will be used for RSE, governors should take into account:

- The need to support parents and carers by providing education which is faithful to the teachings of the Church and appropriate for the ages and stages of development of the pupils;
- The extent to which specific materials can be used to illustrate the beauty of the human being created by God;
- The values implied by specific resources and the way in which they may be used to enhance pupils' understanding of human development and Catholic teaching;
- The accuracy and clarity of material presented.

It is important that any external visitor to the school is also clear about their role and responsibility while they are in a school. Such visits should complement the school's current programme. Visitors may need guidance to ensure that sessions they deliver are respectful of the teaching of the Catholic Church. Further guidance on working with external visitors can be found in the Education Commission's document *Guidance on visitors and external speakers working with pupils in Catholic schools in the Diocese*.<sup>10</sup> This is available on our website <http://www.educationcommission.org.uk/> and should be consulted before inviting external agencies or visitors into the school.

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<sup>10</sup> *Guidance on visitors and external speakers working with pupils in Catholic schools in the Diocese*, Education Commission, September 2015

## Appendix – Detailed notes on the statutory requirements for Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in England as at February 2016

The key points of the *Education Act 1996* (Sections 403 and 405) which consolidated all previous legislation are:

- All maintained primary and secondary schools must teach the sex and relationship elements of the National Curriculum Science Order;
- All maintained secondary schools must provide RSE as part of the basic curriculum including, as a minimum, education about HIV, AIDS and STI's and teach about human growth and reproduction as set out in the national curriculum;
- All other elements of PSHE, including SRE are non-statutory;
- Section 101(1) of the Education Act 2002 does not require primary schools to provide sex education as part of the 'basic curriculum'. Primary schools can provide sex education but whether they do so is at the discretion of the school;
- All maintained primary and secondary schools are obliged to have an up-to-date, fit for purpose RSE policy that describes the content and organisation of RSE taught outside the National Curriculum Science Order. This is the responsibility of the governing body. They must make copies of the statement available for inspection (at all reasonable times) by parents of registered pupils at the school and provide a copy of the statement free of charge to any parent who asks for one;
- The policy statement must also include a statement about parents' rights under section 405 of the Education Act 1996 to exempt/withdraw their child from sex education.

*The Learning and Skills Act 2000* requires that:

- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided but not from teaching the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under the National Curriculum Science Order;
- Young people learn about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children;
- Young people are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate, having regard to the age and cultural background of the pupils concerned;
- When providing SRE all schools must have regard to the *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance* published in 2000<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, 0116/2000, Department for Education and Employment, July 2000

### *Government Guidance on Personal Social Health Education (PSHE)<sup>12</sup>*

The elements of SRE that are not included in the National Curriculum Science Order are delivered through PSHE and other areas of the curriculum. In 2008 PSHE was extended to include economic education when a new secondary curriculum was introduced<sup>13</sup>. Both PSHE and citizenship are non-statutory at Key Stages 1 and 2. At Key Stages 3 and 4 citizenship becomes statutory, although PSHE remains non-statutory. Both are supported by the National Healthy Schools Programme<sup>14</sup>. PSHE programmes of study and end of key stage statements to help teachers assess progress were published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA).<sup>15</sup>

### *Government Guidance on SRE*

In July 2000, the Department for Education and Employment (now the DfE) published guidance on the delivery of SRE through PSHE in the document *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance*.<sup>16</sup> Elements of the guidance are supported by *the Education and Skills Act 2000*. The guidance aimed to support schools to plan SRE policy and practice. It states that all schools must have an up to date policy which:

- Defines SRE
- Describes how SRE is provided and who is responsible for providing it
- States how SRE is monitored and evaluated
- Includes information about parents right to withdrawal
- Is revised regularly
- Is available for inspection and to parents

It also recommends that SRE is planned and delivered as part of PSHE and Citizenship. Schools are expected to have an overall policy on PSHE and Citizenship which includes SRE. Governing bodies are expected to involve parents, children and young people, and health and other professionals to ensure that SRE addresses the needs of the community education and health providers, and the needs of children and young people.

### *Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013*

Pupils must be aware that the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 extends civil marriage to same sex couples in England and Wales. Nothing in the act affects Catholic schools' rights to teach on marriage or on same sex relationships in accord with the norms of the Catholic Church, provided it is done in an appropriate and sensitive way.

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<sup>12</sup> Some schools/documents refer to *Personal Social Health Economic Education (PSHEE)*

<sup>13</sup> Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency, *The Secondary Curriculum*, 18 November, 2010

<sup>14</sup> Department of Health, *National Healthy Schools Status: A Guide for Schools*, (London: Department of health, 2005)

<sup>15</sup> Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency, *End of Key Stage Statements for PSHE*, 19 November 2010)

<sup>16</sup> Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, 0116/2000, Department for Education and Employment, July 2000

### *Academies and Free Schools*

Academies and Free Schools do not have to follow the National Curriculum and so are not under the same statutory obligations as maintained schools. As such, academies are not obliged to teach sex and relationships education, although if they do, they must have regard to the SRE guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Catholic academies must follow the policy, directives and guidance provided by the Diocese.