



Archdiocese of
Birmingham

St Thomas More Catholic Academy

St Thomas More
Catholic Academy
FAITH | EXCELLENCE | RESPECT

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Date of Policy:	February 2019
Member of Staff Responsible:	Charlotte Rowley
SLT: Headteacher:	Charlotte Rowley Mark Rayner
Chair of the Academy Representatives: Nominated Academy Representative:	Rob Fello
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All Saints Catholic Collegiate

Aspire to be More

Our school ethos is built upon our values of **Faith, Excellence and Respect**. Our Mission Statement encompasses our vision for St Thomas More Catholic Academy.

Mission Statement

Christ is at the heart of our community, where everyone is known and loved.

In fulfilling our mission we are a school of prayer. We live as a community of love, peace and reconciliation, valuing everyone's dignity as a child of God to promote and celebrate the growth and achievement of the whole person.

The students and staff were consulted about our Mission Statement and this was updated in 2016. They also decided that our motto should be **Aspire to be More** as this encompasses all that we strive to achieve at St Thomas More.

All Saints Catholic Collegiate Mission Statement

Our Academy ensures that Christ is at the centre of all that we do and that every member of our community is known, loved and respected.

Through the Gospel Values of love, reconciliation, justice and peace we recognise everyone as a Child of God.

We work together so that our pupils are supported to serve others and achieve their full potential in a caring, safe and secure environment.

United in Faith, Love and Learning

In accordance with our Mission statement at St Thomas More we strive to secure a shared vision for all associated with our school community. Sex and Relationships Education is an integral part of the curriculum for all students in Years 7 to 13 and takes place within the theological, spiritual and moral context of the Roman Catholic tradition.

St Thomas More is in the Birmingham Archdiocese

A significant proportion of our students are Catholic and St Thomas More Catholic Academy is founded upon Catholic values. As a Catholic school we therefore base everything we do on Catholic values and teaching.

Defining Relationships and Sex Education

The DFE guidance defines RSE as ‘lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage and family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health. It is about the development of the pupil’s knowledge and understanding of her or him as a sexual being, about what it means to be fully human, called to live in right relationships with self and others and being enables to make moral decisions in conscience. The DFE identifies three main elements: ‘attitudes and values, personal and social skills, knowledge and understanding.’

Moral and Values Framework

“I have come that you may have life and have it to the full,” (John 10:10)

This policy is founded upon Christian Values and teachings of the Catholic Church. The inclusion of positive, person centred education is at the heart of Catholic Christian education and this education is basically 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 (Genesis 1:26). Education must take full count of the integrity of the whole human person one body, one soul. Thus the gift of sexuality must be seen as intimately bound to human relationships, especially that of the sacrament of marriage within the Catholic faith.

“God is love and in himself a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in his own image.... God inscribed the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion.”
Catechism of the Catholic Church (Para. 23331-2364).

We recognise that sex education in all its forms is of paramount importance to the development of young people; that increasingly in today’s society young people need help and guidance in their struggle to live out their lives as members of the Christian family.

Requirements of the 1988 Education Act and Directives from the Bishop’s Conference

The 1988 Education Reform Act states that schools should provide a curriculum which promotes the ***“spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and of society and prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.”***

Sex education is an integral part of the growth and development of pupils and cannot be neglected if the academy is to fulfil its statutory obligation.

Circular 0116/2000 from the department for education makes specific requirements of schools. All Catholic maintained secondary schools are required to make provision for sex education for all pupils registered at the school. Sex education must include education about HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. The legislation makes note that voluntary aided schools will take a particular religious perspective. (Circular 0116/2000, para 1.7).

Description of Policy

This policy takes into account documentation from the Catholic Education, The New Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Birmingham Diocese 'All that I am' and government recommendations made.

We believe that:

“.....Children and young people should be helped to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual qualities They should receive a positive and prudent education in matters relating to sex.... and young people have the right to be stimulated to make sound moral judgments based upon well informed conscience and put them into practice with a sense of personal commitment....”
Gravissimum Education (Para.3), Second Vatican Council

“All that I am” KS2 Diocesan sex education programme is **“rooted in a Catholic understanding of the human person and an appreciation that authentic human love is more than sexual expression. For the human person is made in the image and likeness of God and dignity is inalienable.’** At St Thomas More Catholic Academy the Religious Education department use ‘Where I am’, ‘How I am’ and ‘Who I am’ to assist in the planning of sex and relationships education at Key Stage 3,4 and 5 respectively. This is to ensure that all students access quality information and reflection time regarding their personal development.

This programme is based on the following principals:

- The belief that every human life has an intrinsic and absolute value through being created by God and in the image of God.
- This value derives from the simple fact of existing and is not dependent on an individual’s age, abilities, social acceptability or any other characteristic.
- Self-respect and respect for each other must underlie all human relationships.

The Role and Responsibility of Parents

Parents are the first and most important educators of their children in terms of faith and secular matters and this is particularly so in the often sensitive areas of sex and health education. St Thomas More sees its role as being supportive to parents, by providing an educational and community environment where young people can grow and mature.

In compliance with statutory regulations parents will be consulted before the teaching of any area of the sex education programme which is not part of either the National Curriculum or the content of an examination course. If objection is received to their child participating students will be removed from these lessons. It is hoped that parents will allow their child to participate in all aspects of sex education within the college. Any parental request to withdraw their child from a particular series of lessons should be handled sensitively and in every instance referred to the Headteacher Mr Rayner.

Vision of Humanity

Our programmes and Schemes of Learning are based on a vision of humanity found in scripture and the teachings of the Church.

'All human beings are made in the image and likeness of God' (Genesis 1:26)

We are an expression of God's love and are in turn called to return that love. This finds expression in our love of God and our fellow human beings. Sexuality, which is a gift from God, is an integral part of our nature, to be cherished and nurtured.

We express our sexuality in many ways which are dependent on whether we are married or single.

'In marriage, the mutual love of husband and wife becomes an image of the absolute and unfailing love with which God loves man'
Catechism of the Catholic Church (Para 1604)

All educational programmes and Schemes of Learning should conform to the teachings of the Holy Catholic Church. In addition it is important that any learning materials and resources are carefully checked and all outside speakers are sympathetic and understanding of the aims of the College.

Aims

Through the sex and relationship education programme we aim to support the personal moral and social development of all students, ensuring that they have the ability to accept their own and others sexuality in positive ways; to appreciate relationships based on mutual respect, dignity and responsibility, free from abuse. To ensure the teaching of sex education within the academy is not isolated and is clearly placed within a moral framework, where sexuality is taught it is always in the context of relationships and responsibilities.

Christian values are the foundation upon which this policy is built, but it should be delivered in such a way that does not preach but rather informs and helps a student, enabling them to reach their own conclusions upon thoughtful reflection, in the light of Christian values and the teaching of the Catholic Church.

Objectives:

- To be holistic – encompassing all aspects of the student – mind, body/soul, so as to engender growth in self-respect and self-worth, recognising that each of us is created in the image of God.
- To be integrated into the curriculum, particularly within the Pastoral Curriculum, Religious Studies and Science.
- To explore what makes us human, from where true happiness evolves and have an appreciation for the values of family life.
- To enable students to have an understanding that love is central and the basis of all meaningful relationships. To enable students to reflect on their own relationships and recognise the qualities that help relationships to grow and develop positively.

The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament."

Catechism of the Catholic Church (para 1601)

- To understand their own body and physical and emotional development, particularly through puberty. To have an understanding of their own fertility. To understand the options available for family planning and the Catholic Churches teachings related to natural and artificial forms, particularly those that are abortifacient.
- To explain the process of human procreation.

'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.' (Jeremiah 1:5)

- To understand and give sensitive consideration to the beliefs, values and culture of others.
- To help with the careful consideration of and teaching on homosexuality.

'The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.'

Catechism of the Catholic Church (para 2358)

- To emphasise the Christian belief in the Sanctity of Human Life.

- To consider AIDS and related issues.
- To encourage students to be aware of their own attitudes and values and have a sense of responsibility for themselves. To help students resist peer, social and media pressures where necessary. To help students develop their critical faculties and be aware of the values conveyed by the media in relation to self-image and sexuality. To explore issues caused through the rise in social media relating to forming loving and trusting relationships.
- Most importantly to provide a forum where students can share openly, offering a climate of support where they know they will be listened to sensitively. This will facilitate a non-judgemental environment for continued growth where students can ask questions with the confidence that they will be listened to and misinformation will be sensitively corrected.

Organisation of the Sex Education Programme

The team responsible for planning, delivery and evaluation of the programme:

- Head of Religious Education.
- Head of Science
- Head of Years / Pastoral.

All staff should be aware of the content of the policy in order to support the pastoral care of students. The school nurse, lay chaplains and outside agencies are expected to support the policy and underlying ethos behind it.

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 assist 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 / carers will be informed by letter when the more sensitive aspects of RSE will be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children'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 school in the RSE programme. Our aim is that, at the end of the consultations process, every parent and carer will have full confidence in the school's RSE programme to meet their child's needs.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RSE except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum science orders. Should parents wish to withdraw their children they are asked to notify the school by contacting the head teacher. The school will provide support by providing material for parents to help the children with their learning.

Training Provision

Members of staff involved in the implementation of the policy within the college will be supported whenever necessary by appropriate training and advice. Resources will be made available to staff to support understanding of Catholic teaching where appropriate.

Outside Speakers / Agencies

All outside speakers and agencies will be contacted before coming into school to ensure that both parties are clear about exactly what is to be delivered. An initial meeting should take place wherever possible between the speaker and a representative from the school. This works well as everybody is clear about what can and can't be taught and the context of discussions. St Thomas More Catholic Academy has a good relationship with a variety of outside agencies and works in partnership with our school nursing service and PCSOs.

When working with visiting speakers we have a responsibility to ensure that both the content and practice accord with school policy. It is important that:

- The session should be planned in discussion with the organising Head of Department / Head of Year.
- A clear brief should be given to the speaker, with a copy of the School's Mission Statement and appropriate policies, along with information about the target group and curriculum context.
- Follow up and evaluation of the input with students should be planned at the time of booking.
- A member of staff should be present at the initial talk. This would usually be the class teacher.
- Any leaflets or other materials to be given out to students or used in the classroom should be seen by an appropriate member of staff before being distributed.

Methodology and approach, including explicitness and handling of controversial topics

Family Life and Sex Education in the school will be delivered within particular subject areas and in accordance with the relevant National Curriculum criteria and/or Schemes of Learning. Where controversial issues are considered, there will be the opportunity to reflect not only on the biological and sociological facts but the topics will at some point be placed within a moral context and considered in the light of Christian teaching.

Specifically:

Ethical issues – (Inc; Stem cell research, cloning, genetic engineering etc.) Students will be taught the Catholic views on the issue and also be given the opportunity to discuss all views in an appropriate manner.

Homosexuality – When the issue is explored it will be considered in the context of the Church's teaching on human sexuality, the aim will also be to promote tolerance and counter prejudice.

Contraception – Students will be presented with the Church’s teaching. They will also have the opportunity to discuss and consider a variety of options on this topic.

Abortion – Students will consider the religious and humanitarian objections to abortion as well as arguments supporting the practice.

Specific class/group arrangements

Key departments (see previous) and outside agencies will lead the delivery of the programme supported by pastoral sessions, as appropriate.

Equal Opportunities

Issues relating to equal opportunities will be discussed and developed as appropriate.

Students with special educational needs

In planning sex education for students and special educational needs (including disabilities) teachers will need to consider whether:

- Particular aspects of the programme need to be emphasised/expanded or given more/less time. Materials from an earlier Key Stage might be used or adapted.
- Certain students should be given opportunities to revisit knowledge and skills in different contexts.
- Activities should be adapted to provide support for students with difficulties in cognition and learning or communication and interaction. This could include placing greater emphasis on discussion, modelling, role-play and mechanisms for recording students, thoughts that do not necessarily rely on written materials.

Procedures for reviewing the effectiveness of programme

Individual subjects will evaluate their own programmes of study. It is desirable that staff directly involved in teaching the programme will meet to share and discuss any issues or concerns which arise. The Departments will with the SLT responsible review the programme as appropriate. It will also be reviewed bi-annually as part of the whole school departmental review process. Students will be assessed in accordance with subject arrangements.

Criteria for selection of resources

The resources used to support the teaching of this policy within the school will first be selected on the basis that they reflect the Christian values and the teaching of the Church. Secondly they must also fulfil the criteria laid down by the Syllabi; Clarification of the Church’s teaching will be given where necessary.

Feeder schools

Not all schools have chosen to adopt a formal sex education policy although some do follow the Key stage 1 and 2 “All that I am” programme. Therefore we will adopt the position that students who join the college in year 7 will have covered little if any of the material studied at KS3 or KS4. The policy will be adapted as appropriate.

Dissemination of the policy

There has been a consultation process involving the relevant staff and local academy representatives. The policy is stored centrally and available to all staff and local academy representatives. Parents are able to access a copy of the policy from the academy website. Parents may comment/make representation, if they wish to do so.

Exclusions

Mentoring of individual pupils takes place in all year groups and is sometimes through external agencies including our school nurse. Pupils to be mentored are referred through the pastoral structure or outside agencies and can be related to problems/concerns of a personal nature. When meeting health professionals and some outside agencies St Thomas More recognises that professionals may respect patient confidentiality where deemed appropriate by that professional.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Mission group will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of the programme by examining plans, schemes of work and samples of students’ work at regular intervals. The programme will be evaluated biannually by means of questionnaires / response sheets / needs assessments given to students or through discussion with students, staff and parents. The results of the evaluations 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.

Attached

- Appendix 1 – Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum Summary Science and R.E.
- Appendix 2 – Example of wording for letter to parents.