
St. Mary's CE Academy

'Excellence through faith & learning'



Relationships & Health Education Policy

*"I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full."*

John 10:10

Reviewed: Spring 2022
Approved by Governors: Spring 2022
Date of next review: Spring 2024



Health Education Policy

Introduction:

At St Mary's, we aim to provide a caring environment where every child can thrive and is supported to achieve their unique & amazing potential as a child of God. As such, this means that we place the child at the centre of our school practice & want them to make sense of growing up as well as understand some of the bigger questions in life. Our policy has been designed in consultation with our whole school community so that it fully reflects the DfE requirements for September 2020, whilst also delivering the content in a way that is age & developmentally appropriate plus sensitive to the needs & backgrounds of all our pupils & families.

We believe that our Relationships & Health programme promotes pupils' self-esteem, emotional development and resourcefulness and helps children to form and maintain satisfying relationships. This begins a lifelong process of relationships and feelings, acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs and attitudes about sex and sexuality. It should help young people to learn to respect themselves and others and to move with confidence from childhood, through adolescence and into adulthood. Relationships and Health education is learning about physical, moral, social and spiritual development and therefore helps pupils develop the skills and understanding they need to live confident, healthy and independent lives.

Main Elements of Relationships and Health Education:

At St Mary's, there are three main elements to our Relationship and Health Programme:

1. **Attitudes and Values** – This includes: learning the value of love, respect and care; learning the value of family life, marriage and stable loving relationships within different family makeups for the nurture of children.
2. **Personal and Social Skills** – This includes: learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively; making choices and understanding differences and without prejudice. It includes being aware of and recognising the dangers of child sexual exploitation and taking sensible and firm action to avoid this, i.e. following online safety rules, avoiding social media and chat rooms (especially when underage) and reporting intrusive responses both online and to an adult.
3. **Knowledge and Understanding** – This includes: learning and understanding the physical development at appropriate stages as well as understanding human sexuality and reproduction. This includes the contribution of Science whereby babies can be made in different ways such as IVF, sexual health, emotions and relationships.

Whilst some elements of the programme may be taught throughout the year as part of Science curriculum (particularly Y2 & Y5 in the 'Animals Including Humans' and Y6 in their 'Evolution & Inheritance' topics) most of it will be taught during the spring

term as part of our Personal, Social, Health & Emotional (PSHE) curriculum. As part of this work, we cover the various 'life processes' (MRS NERG) for both animals & humans but will have a particular focus on relationships, healthy living & growing up.

At St Mary's, we believe that Effective Relationships and Health Education:

- Is delivered as part of the curriculum and is an integral part of the PSHCE and Science curriculum.
- Is provided early: before puberty, before feelings of sexual attraction and before young people develop sexual relationships.
- Is taught together in class groups though may be separated as and when appropriate.
- Is the entitlement of each child in school.
- Is empowering for all pupils, regardless of sexuality, gender, ethnicity, faith, ability or disability.
- Is covered with great sensitivity & provide opportunity for children to reflect, ask questions and to discuss their views on this vital aspect of life & learning.
- Offers a positive and open view of sex and sexuality and supports sexual self-acceptance.

Coverage:

The content covered as part of each year group can be seen in our *Growing Up at St Mary's Booklet* (please see our school website & click on the link for a copy or ask your child's class teacher for a copy). This leaflet provides information about the content for each year group & can also provide parents & carers with a helpful starting point to discuss issues that can be hard to broach. Parents & carers are informed of planned sex education sessions in curriculum news information sheets on a termly basis.

Responsibilities:

- It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to ensure that Relationships and Health is taught within the parameters of the PSHCE and Science curriculum and that it is an entitlement of every child
- Governors will ensure that that staff and parents are consulted about the content and delivery of the curriculum through the annual sending out of the *Growing Up at St Mary's Booklet*. This involves subject leaders, staff, governors and parents. Children may be consulted through the School Council where necessary.
- Parents are informed of their right to withdraw their child from Sex Education lessons, but not those which fall under the Science National Curriculum. This is on the website and is publicised each year via the school newsletter & year group letter to parents.
- The 'Growing Up at St Mary's' Booklet provides an overview of the Relationships and Health programme and is sent out to parents during the spring term. Parents also have the opportunity to look at the materials used on request.
- The PSHCE & Science Subject Leaders monitors and evaluates SRE teaching and learning and reviews and update Health and Relationships education policy and materials and resources.

Sensitive Issues:

From time to time, sensitive issues will be raised by pupils. It is important that all individuals concerned with the delivery of Relationships, sex and health education in school are aware of the agreed values framework (see attitudes and values above).

Parents and others should be reassured that the personal beliefs and attitudes of a teacher should not influence the teaching of Relationship, sex and health education. The issues concerned may include contraception, abortion, safe sex, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, sexual identity or orientation, homophobic bullying and different families. It is important to acknowledge that pupils may hear these terms through different sources such as the media and need to feel able to ask for further information. The response from the member of staff will be appropriate to the child's age and maturity and thought will be given to whether the response is appropriate in a class, small group or individual situation. The detailed lesson planning will clearly state the content that will be covered. Questions will always be treated with respect and with a caring response. Staff and other adults will always be sensitive to underlying problems which may be worrying a child. The main guide lines in this situation are:

- be sensitive;
- is the context appropriate?
- is the question relevant to the content of the lesson?
- is the group ready in terms of maturity?

In such instances, teachers may answer a question with the response "*We are not learning about this in Y... You may ask your Mum and Dad when you get home. You will learn more about this in Y.. (if known)*". If staff have a concern, parents may be contacted.

Confidentiality:

Staff should be clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities. They should be familiar with the procedures set out **DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' as stated in regular Safeguarding Training**. Teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality.

In certain circumstances a child may wish to confide in a trusted member of staff. They should be made aware before any disclosure that information may have to be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer (DSLO – Karen Miller or her Deputy, Karole Sargent). If there is a concern about the child's safety, then teachers and the DSLO should follow the guidelines in the Sheffield Safeguarding Policies adopted by the school.

Right of Withdrawal:

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from sex education lessons except those elements taught as part of the National Curriculum Science. Any parent wishing to discuss this aspect of the curriculum in more detail should contact the class teacher or the Head of School for more information.