

*St Leo's and Southmead  
Catholic Nursery and Primary School  
Serving the Community*



*Relationships and Sex  
Education Policy*

# *St Leo's and Southmead Catholic Nursery and Primary School Serving The Community*

## SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

*In our school, we want to celebrate God's gift of life together;  
By inspiring , enhancing and developing tomorrow's talent,  
today!*

*We respect all; aiming to achieve and live our values.  
A place to allow everyone to flourish!*

Following the *Guiding Principles*, the Catholic character of the school **requires** that, in the specific area of Education in Relationships and Sex, the leadership and management of St. Leos and Southmead Catholic Primary School, working with foundation governors, will:

- **ensure** that the school seeks to remain faithful to Catholic belief and teaching on matters of faith and morality.
- **promote** Catholic belief and teaching concerning human dignity and relationships and, in particular, encourage an understanding of and respect for the sanctity of human life, the virtue of chastity, and the sacrament of marriage.
- **oversee** the delivery of education in sex and relationships to guarantee its faithfulness to the belief and teaching of the Catholic Church (this includes the content of teaching and resources) so that it excludes anything which risks reducing the understanding of sexuality to the level of a mere bodily function, biological process or recreational activity.
- **recognise** the primary role of parents in the education of their children and, 'in particular, sex education is a basic right of the parents and must always be carried out under their close supervision.' The school recognises that education in relationships and sex is done in the name of parents, with their consent and with their authorisation. Consequently, any school based education in relationships and sex must always be carried out in direct consultation with parents.

- **demonstrate** pastoral sensitivity for the cultural, personal and family circumstances of children and young people while maintaining the integrity of Catholic belief and teaching.
- **enable** the formation of children and young people through a consistent application of Catholic belief and teaching on matters of faith and morality across the whole curriculum and from all staff.
- **monitor** the involvement and teaching of external agencies/visiting speakers, and the distribution of resources within school provided by them - in order that all presentations and content are in accordance with the belief and teachings of the Catholic Church.

Following the *Guiding Principles*, the leadership and management of the school, working with governors, and giving due regard to the Catholic character of the school, will ensure that in the specific area of education in relationships and sex, St. Leos and Southmead Catholic Primary School **promotes**:

- (a) **An approach that presents the teaching of the Catholic Church** on matters of relationships and sex, rooted in the biblical presentation of the human person who is made in the image of God to love and to be loved, as a positive and consistent ethic for life encouraging pupils and young people to enter into proper and fulfilling relationships. Such an approach will guard against a discouraging and negative presentation of Catholic Church teaching which comes across as a series of random and arbitrary prohibitions.
- (b) **A developmental approach which gives gradual and positive education** in relationships and sex to enable children and young people to have accurate information, seek to develop a properly formed conscience to make right judgements, and to take right actions in the many and varied situations in which they may find themselves. Pupils and young people will need time to reflect on what they are taught. They will need to ask questions and articulate their thoughts and anxieties in a context of respect and trust.
- (c) **A whole person approach** which accepts that pupils and young people are sexual beings who have received their sexuality as a gift from God and which is something essential to personal identity: 'Sexuality is a fundamental component of personality, one of its modes of being ... of communicating with others, of feeling, of expressing and of living human love. Therefore it is an integral part of the development of the personality and of its educative process'. Catholic schools have a responsibility to ensure that the information given to pupils and young people is received in the context of the teaching of the Catholic Church

and, therefore, based on sound theological principles. This positive approach excludes anything which risks reducing the understanding of sexuality to the level of a mere bodily function, biological process or recreational activity.

- (d) **A whole school approach** to education in relationships and sex which is transmitted in the context of the Catholic life of the school through a cohesive set of guiding principles which are informed by the mission statement and flow from the Gospel of Christ and the virtues. 'Pupils and young people will have different maturation rates and different levels of sexual awareness. The pressures on them, from society and the media, often subliminal, cannot be underestimated. The school must be ready to accompany them on their journey to adulthood, modelling for them and enabling them to become capable of right and proper relationships. Consequently, while a senior member of staff should be responsible for the development and co-ordination of the necessary programmes, it is a responsibility shared by the whole staff, with the whole range of the curriculum contributing to the formation of right moral attitudes in our children and young people'.
- (e) **Loving relationships between people** so that the love experienced by pupils, students and staff is founded on the Christ-centred impulse to love and to be loved.
- (f) **A framework for living out these relationships** anchored in the principles which flow from the Gospel and the practice of the virtues: faith, hope, love, prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, chastity; and the fruits of the Holy Spirit, charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, and self-control.
- (g) **All that is worthy in relationships** such as love, respect, honesty, generosity, kindness, gentleness etc and rejects abuse and exploitation.
- (h) **An approach to human life which promotes its God-given dignity**, goodness and sanctity, its joy and wonder and seeks to awaken pupils and students to their most creative possibilities so that gifts and talents can be placed at the service of God and the community.
- (i) **The positive presentation and encouragement to live modestly** by respecting the dignity of oneself and others, especially with regard to our sexuality, and with chastity which can guide us to make personal choices which are responsible, mature and recognise that sexual intimacy is for the purpose of love and new life within marriage.
- (j) **Respect for the child's sense of delicacy** and privacy concerning sexual

matters, and protection of children and young people from lessons or materials in human sexuality which are explicit, premature or misleading.

- (k) **Marriage as the equal union of man and woman** who love each other and commit to each other before God and the community. Marriage is the place for the sexual expression of loving intimacy which is open to life. Christian marriage expresses the truth about love and can serve as a prophetic proclamation of a human being's real needs: that a man and a woman are called upon from the beginning to live in a communion of life and love, and that this communion leads to a strengthening of the dignity of the spouses, the good of the children and of society itself.

## **Definition of Education in Relationships and Sex**

### **Introduction**

Education in sex and relationships is founded on the Catholic understanding of the human person, relationships, marriage and the gift of sexuality revealed in Scripture and presented in Catholic Church teaching. The human person, with a unity and dignity that comes from God, is created for and called to a life of self-giving love expressed in relationship with God and with others. This authentic human love is always more than sexual expression for the human person is made in the image and likeness of God.

### **Definition**

As a Catholic school, our role is to nurture the development of the whole person. Children will learn about their spiritual, social, moral, emotional and physical development in ways appropriate to their age, level of maturity and developmental needs because their ability to form loving, caring, happy, strong, healthy, stable relationships is based upon this lifelong learning. Parents are the primary educators in this regard. This development is also fostered in many areas of the school curriculum and includes aspects of character such as self-respect, confidence and responsibility, and fundamentally an understanding of oneself as a unique and beautiful part of God's creation. The centrality of self-giving love, the importance of love for relationships, including love's sexual expression in marriage is taught and promoted. The teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health will be placed in the context of Catholic Church teaching. Education in relationships and sex will reflect on and explore family life and relationships because it is in the family that children first experience love, affection, respect, saying sorry, forgiveness and other ways of relating to others.

It is in this Catholic context that the definition of SRE, given in DfEE guidance is understood. This guidance states that SRE is the 'lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect,

love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity - this would be inappropriate teaching.' Education for relationships and sex provided in this school will seek to build on the child's own experience, sensitive to the varied home background of individual pupils. It will incorporate through its aim, objectives, content, and teaching, the three main elements of SRE - attitudes and values, personal and social skills, knowledge and understanding within a Catholic context.

### **Aim of Catholic Education in Sex and Relationships**

Catholic education in relationships and sex aims to support parents in their role as first educators of their children. Using a faith motivated person-centred approach the school will aim to ensure that all pupils, appropriate to their age, level of maturity and developmental needs, develop the necessary attitudes and values, the personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding to ensure that they have the capacity to make sound judgements, good choices and enjoy relationships based on love, mutual respect, dignity and responsibility free from any abuse or exploitation and to accept their own and others' sexuality in positive ways and as a gift essential to their personal identity.

### **Objectives of Catholic Education in Relationships and Sex**

This aim will be achieved by generating an ethos in the classroom and throughout the school based on love, mutual respect, trust and confidentiality and by meeting the following objectives to enable children to

- know that they are a unique creation of God and so are able to grow in self-respect developing a positive attitude to themselves, their feelings and their sexuality
- understand that self-giving love is central to relationships
- recognise the importance of forgiveness and saying sorry in relationships
- understand the reasons for self-respect, and why they should act with respect and responsibility in their relationships
- reflect on their own relationships recognising those qualities that help relationships grow
- develop knowledge, communication skills and understanding in order to help personal decision-making
- act responsibly as an individual and as a member of a group

- identify and have the confidence to talk about their emotions and how to respond positively to them
- communicate a point of view clearly and appropriately and listen to the views of others
- take responsibility for oneself and for one's actions
- come to understand the influence and impact of the media, Internet, peer groups and develop the ability to assess pressures and respond appropriately
- explore and respond appropriately to prejudice and gender stereotyping
- think positively about their own body
- understand, in ways appropriate to their age and developmental needs, the changes they will undergo including puberty
- know the correct vocabulary for external body parts, sexual organs, and menstruation
- think positively about other people, adults as well as children
- take care of themselves, their health, safety and personal hygiene
- know that some diseases are infectious
- keep themselves safe and ask for help and support when needed
- become aware of good choices and wrong choices and their consequences
- understand that some choices can entail undesirable outcomes, such as psychological distress, physical trauma, STIs, HIV/AIDS, abortion
- make good choices about what to do in particular situations
- manage relationships with friends confidently and effectively
- develop the ability to form positive, non-exploitative relationships and reject bullying

- explore and reflect on their own experience of people who are married
- have an understanding of the family, an appreciation of the values of family life and the roles and responsibilities of family members
- have an understanding of a family as a spiritual community in which members can grow in faith, hope and love
- understand that the difference between male and female is part of God's loving and creative plan
- understand sexual behaviour and reproduction in the context of a loving and self-giving marriage avoiding its reduction to bodily functions
- understand the Church's teaching on sexual activity outside of marriage
- understand the Church's teaching on the distinction between sexual orientation and sexual activity
- understand the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception
- recognise and appreciate the Catholic belief in the importance of marriage for family life and the bringing up of children

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **1. Parents**

"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 school is bound to observe when it cooperates in sex education, by entering into the same spirit that animates the parents" (*The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995).

We recognise parents as the first educators of their children. This is their right and duty, and flows from their natural relationship to each other and to their children. We recognise that parents sometimes experience and express difficulty in discussing sex and relationships with their children. The school seeks to support, and not replace them in this situation. Support, understanding and advice will be offered to parents to deal with sensitive issues they may need to address.



- (a) The school will provide in advance full information to parents and opportunities for consultation and involvement in the Education in Relationships and Sex programme (see role of head teacher below).
- (b) The school sees Catholic Education in Relationships and Sex as an integral part of the religious dimension of school life and asks that parents, who may wish to withdraw their child from the programme, to discuss their intention, in the first instance, with the headteacher or the delegated senior leader. However, parents are entitled to withdraw their child (up to age 19) from any or all sessions of the programme and for any reason, except that taught within National Curriculum Science. Parents must inform the school in writing in advance if they intend to withdraw their child so that alternative and appropriate supervision can be made.
- (c) Parents' concerns or objections to the content or delivery of the Education in Relationships and Sex programme should be addressed in the first instance to the delegated senior leader or headteacher. Should this fail to resolve the matter then the school's complaints procedure should be followed and if necessary contact with the Governing Body.

## **2. Governors**

The Foundation Governors of Catholic schools are appointed by the Bishop in order to promote and safeguard the Catholic character of the school.

- (a) The governors of this Catholic school acknowledge and intend to promote the consistent teaching of the Catholic Church in the fulfilment of their ecclesial and statutory duties, for the benefit of the children in their care.
- (b) They recognise that the parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children, and that parents have special rights and duties over education in personal relationships.

The governors intend to comply with statutory requirements.

## **4. Headteachers and delegated responsibility**

- (a) The headteacher has overall responsibility for implementing the Catholic Education in Relationships and Sex programme and its integration into the school's curriculum and Catholic life.
- (b) Headteachers have a particular duty to respect and support the primary role of parents in this field.
- (c) The headteacher may appoint a Coordinator for Catholic Education in Relationships and sex - a suitable person appropriately trained. The headteacher or delegated senior person will ensure that any discussion or treatment of sexuality in the school curriculum is consistent with Catholic teaching. They will assist colleagues to acquire and present up-

to-date knowledge of the vision and teaching of the Catholic Church in this field.

- (d) The headteacher or delegated senior person will provide parents with full information about the proposed Catholic Education for Relationships and Sex programme before it is initiated, and will obtain parental consent in respect of each child before the child is allowed to participate in the programme. Opportunities for consultation and involvement will also be offered.

## **5. Staff**

- (a) Teachers and all those contributing to Catholic Education in Relationships and sex are expected to work within the values framework as described in the guiding principles and policy document, in line with the school's ethos.
- (b) Appropriate development and training will be undertaken. It will accord fully with the approach of the Catholic Church and take into account current statutory requirements.