

St Francis Catholic Primary School



Sexual Education Policy

Jesus said 'Love one another as I have loved you'

St Francis School is a loving community, respecting every child and adult and caring for God's world, as we help each other to do our best and grow together in Christ.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment.

1. Introduction

This sex education policy is based upon the Catholic values which are promoted in the schools Mission Statement. The Bishops' Conference Statement of 1987 in speaking of the school's programme of Education for Personal Relationships states that it:

"... aims to enable them (the pupils) to make right judgements, and to take the right actions in the many and varied situations in which they may find themselves."

And again in the Bishops' Conference Statement of 1994 states that –

"We must help them develop an appreciation of the values underpinning teaching in order that they can make them their own and thus be helped to make informed decisions and choices throughout their lives."

Consideration has also been given to the DfEE guidance document Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (ref DfEE 0116/2000). In this document, sex education is defined as 'learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about understanding 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'.

Sex education is part of the personal, social and health education curriculum in our school. While we use sex education to inform children about sexual issues, we do this with regard to matters of morality and individual responsibility, and in a way that allows children to ask and explore moral questions. We do not use sex education as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation.

2. Aims and objectives

2.1 We teach children about:

the physical development of their bodies as they grow into adults;

the way humans reproduce;

respect for their own bodies and the importance of sexual activity as part of a committed, long-term, and loving relationship; the importance of family life;

moral questions;

relationship issues;

respect for the views of other people;

3. Context

We teach sex education in the context of the school's aims and values framework. While sex education in our school means that we give children information about sexual behaviour, we do this with an awareness of the moral code and Catholic values which underpin all our work in school. In particular, we teach sex education in the belief that:

sex education should be taught in the context of marriage and family life;

sex education is part of a wider social, personal, spiritual and moral education process;

children should be taught to have respect for their own bodies;

children should learn about their responsibilities to others, and be aware of the consequences of sexual activity;

it is important to build positive relationships with others, involving trust and respect; children need to learn the importance of self-control.

4. Organisation

4.1 We teach sex education through different aspects of the curriculum. While we carry out the main sex education teaching through the 'Journey in Love' programme, we also teach some sex education through other subject areas, where we feel that they contribute significantly to a child's knowledge and understanding of his or her own body, and how it is changing and developing, such as personal social & health (PSHE) and Science.

4.2 The 'Journey in Love' programme has been written specifically for Catholic Schools in that children may grow and develop healthy and holistically towards an understanding of their gender and its implications for successful relationships. An aspect of the mystery of love is treated in each year group; children and young people are encouraged to marvel at the wonder and beauty of God's creative love. This is reflected in each stage of a person's growth in the Primary years through a series of suggested, progressive and developmental tasks, activities and reflections which focus on physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development.

4.3 In science lessons in both key stages, teachers inform children about puberty and how a baby is born. For this aspect of the school's teaching, we follow the guidance material in the national scheme of work for science. In Key Stage 1 we teach children about how animals, including humans, move, feed, grow and reproduce, and we also teach them about the main parts of the body. Children learn to appreciate the differences between people and how to show respect for each other. In Key Stage 2 we teach about life processes and the main stages of the human life cycle in greater depth.

4.4 In Year 6 we place a particular emphasis on PSHE, as many children experience puberty at this age. We take diocesan advice about suitable teaching materials to use with our children in these lessons. Teachers do their best to answer all questions with sensitivity and care. By the end of Key Stage 2, we ensure that both boys and girls know how babies are born, how their bodies change during puberty, what menstruation is, and how it affects women. We always teach this with due regard for the emotional development of the children (as stated earlier in this policy).

4.5 We arrange a meeting for all parents and carers of children in Year 6 to discuss this particular programme of lessons, to explain what the issues are and how they are taught, and to see the materials the school uses in its teaching.

5. The Role of Parents

The school is well aware that the primary role in children's sex education lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. In promoting this we:

inform parents about the school's sex education policy and practice;
answer any questions that parents may have about the sex education of their child;

take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for sex education in the school;
encourage parents to be involved in reviewing the school policy and making modifications to it as necessary;
inform parents about the best practice known with regard to sex education, so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home.

We believe that, through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing body and their increasing responsibilities.

5.2 Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the sex education programme that we teach in our school. If a parent wishes their child to be withdrawn from sex education lessons, they should discuss this with the Head Teacher, and make it clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in.

6. The Role of Other Members of the Community

6.1 We encourage other valued members of the community to work with us to provide advice and support to the children with regard to health education. Other people that we may call on include the Parish Priest, social workers (Brentwood Catholic Children's Society), members of the Governing Body, Parishioners who are also health professionals.

7. Confidentiality

7.1 Teachers conduct sex education lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. In these circumstances the teacher will talk to the child as a matter of urgency. If the teacher has concerns, they will draw their concerns to the attention of the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will then deal with the matter in consultation with health care professionals. (See also Child Protection Policy.)

8. The Role of the Head Teacher

8.1 It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about our sex education policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the Head Teacher's responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

8.2 The Head Teacher liaises with external agencies regarding the school sex education programme, and ensures that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the school policy, and that they work within this framework.

8.3 The Head Teacher monitors this policy on a regular basis and reports to governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

9. Monitoring and Review

9.1 The Curriculum Committee of the governing body monitors our sex education policy. This committee reports its findings and recommendations to the full governing body, as necessary, if the policy needs modification. The Curriculum Committee gives serious consideration to any comments from parents about the sex education programme, and makes a record of all such comments.

Mrs. A Hanner (Subject Leader)

Mrs. L Collins (Link Governor)