



## Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

### Mission Statement

*St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College is an inclusive educational community rooted in the Catholic faith, that has Christ at its centre. Our aim is to provide a broad curriculum which emphasises the pursuit of excellence and focuses on career preparation, leadership and service to others. We are committed to preparing the whole person to lead a life of purpose and success in a just and sustainable world*

This policy should be understood in the context of the College's commitment to equality, equity, diversity and inclusion. We aim to ensure that all College practices operate in an inclusive manner.

### Policy Statement

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with students and their parents, set out their intentions about relationships and sex education (RSE). We set out our rationale for, and approach to relationships and sex education in the school.

### Consultation

- RP groups - twice yearly RP specific learner voice
- Yearly review of RSE curriculum content with appropriate staff
- consultation with college governors - information presented by Head of RE during governors' meeting and documents shared

### Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Principal, RSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and staff. The next review date is June 2026.

### Dissemination

The draft policy will be made available to all members of the Governing Body, and all teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Copies of the document will be available to all parents through the college's website.

## Defining Relationship and Sex Education

The DfE guidance states that *“children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way”*<sup>1</sup>. 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 enabled to make moral decisions in conscience. In a Sixth Form context RSE should *“give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure).”*<sup>2</sup>

## Statutory Requirements & Rationale

There are legal requirements to deliver certain aspects of RSE that are part of course specifications. However, the reasons for our inclusion of RSE go further. We are unapologetically Catholic, and as part of our Catholic ethos we believe it is our duty to equip our students with the tools they need to navigate life in a modern, vibrant, multi-faith world. In Religion and Philosophy lessons we provide a safe space where together, we can explore and reflect on the ultimate questions of life, rooted in the example given to us by Jesus.

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

We are involved in RSE precisely because of our Christian beliefs about God and about the human person. The belief in the unique dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God underpins the approach to all education in a Catholic college. Our approach to RSE therefore is rooted in the Catholic Church’s teaching of the human person and presented in a positive framework of Christian ideals.

We help our students to develop critical learning skills they need to explore their own opinions on big questions and listen to other points of view. Our lessons also allow our students to learn about and understand Protected Characteristics, as laid out in the Equality Act 2010.

At the heart of the Christian life is the Trinity; Father, Son and Spirit in communion, united in loving relationship and embracing all people and all creation. As a consequence of the Christian belief that we are made in the image and likeness of God, gender and sexuality are seen as God’s gift, reflect God’s beauty, and share in the divine creativity. RSE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationship as it is there that sexuality grows and develops.

Following the guidance of the Bishops of England and Wales and as advocated by the DfE (and the Welsh Assembly Government) RSE will be embedded in our PSHE framework, comprising of Core RE (Religion and Philosophy) and our tutorial programme. It is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of students. It is centred on Christ’s vision of being human as good news and will be

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<sup>1</sup> Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 4

<sup>2</sup> Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers Page 25

positive and prudent, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.

All RSE is in accordance with the Church's teaching respecting the dignity of humans. It recognises the age, and mixed faith and educational background of the student population.

All lessons, especially those in the RSE programme, will have the best interests of students at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and sex, developing age-appropriate personal and social skills and becoming appreciative of the values and attitudes which underpin the Christian understanding of what it means to be fully human.

### **Aims of RSE and the Mission Statement**

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole person (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional) and we believe that RSE is an integral part of this education. Furthermore, we emphasise the pursuit of excellence, through our college values of inclusion, courage and respect; helping students to grow in knowledge and understanding, recognising the value of all persons and developing caring and sensitive attitudes. It is in this context that we commit ourselves to provide our young adults with a "positive and prudent sexual education"<sup>3</sup> which is compatible with their physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual maturity, and rooted in a Catholic vision of education and the human person.

#### **Objectives:**

To develop the following **attitudes and virtues**:

- reverence for the gift of human sexuality and fertility;
- respect for the dignity of every human being – in their own person and in the person of others;
- joy in the goodness of the created world and their own bodily natures;
- responsibility for their own actions and a recognition of the impact of these on others;
- recognising and valuing their own sexual identity and that of others;
- celebrating the gift of life-long, self-giving love;
- recognising the importance of marriage and family life;
- fidelity in relationships.

To develop the following **personal and social skills**:

- making sound judgements and good choices which have integrity, and which are respectful of the individual's commitments;
- loving and being loved, and the ability to form friendships and loving, stable relationships free from exploitation, abuse and bullying;
- managing emotions within relationships, and when relationships break down, with confidence, sensitivity and dignity;
- managing conflict positively, recognising the value of difference;
- cultivating humility, mercy and compassion, learning to forgive and be forgiven;
- developing self-esteem and confidence, demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others;

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<sup>3</sup> Gravissimum Educationis 1

- building resilience and the ability to resist unwanted pressures, recognising the influence and impact of the media, internet and peer groups and so developing the ability to assess pressures and respond appropriately;
- being patient, delaying gratification and learning to recognise the appropriate stages in the development of relationships, and how to love chastely;
- assessing risks and managing behaviours in order to minimise the risk to health and personal integrity.

**To know and understand:**

- the Church's teaching on relationships and the nature and meaning of sexual love;
- the Church's teaching on marriage and the importance of marriage and family life;
- the centrality and importance of virtue in guiding human living and loving;
- the facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation;
- how to manage fertility in a way which is compatible with their stage of life, their own values and commitments, including an understanding of the difference between natural family planning and artificial contraception;
- how to keep themselves safe from sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid unintended pregnancy, including where to go for advice.

## **Outcomes**

### **Inclusion**

We will ensure RSE is sensitive to the different needs of individual students in respect to students' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, faith or culture and is taught in a way that does not subject students to discrimination. Lessons will also help students to realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber-bullying), use of prejudice-based language and how to respond and ask for help.

In line with the Equalities Act 2010, the College will ensure that we strive to do the best for all of the students, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, pregnancy, maternity, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after students.

### **Broad Content of RSE**

Three aspects of RSE - attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding, and personal and social skills will be provided in three interrelated ways: the whole college/ ethos dimension delivered primarily through RP and tutorials; a specific relationships and sex curriculum delivered through RP lessons; and a cross-curricular dimension where appropriate.

Our programme will cover the following aspects of relationships and sex, grounded in our Catholic ethos and religious teachings as both the starting point and points for discussion - students'

relationship with, and respect for, themselves; how students interact with others including what a healthy friendship and romantic relationship might look like; identifying unhealthy and abusive behaviour in different types of relationships, including consent and incels; procreation, pregnancy, and contraception; keeping yourself safe from STIs and how to access help and advice; the marriage commitment; respecting the humanity in others - taught through a variety of lessons including lessons about anti-Semitism, islamophobia, homophobia, gender identity, extremism, disability, poverty, cyber bullying and protecting yourself online, anti-bullying and the ideas of bystanders and upstanders.

Teaching strategies will include:

- establishing ground rules and expectations
- distancing techniques - students are instructed clearly not to use names or speak in the first person about real issues.
- discussion
- reflection
- active
- brainstorming
- film & video
- group work
- role-play
- values clarification

### **Balanced Curriculum**

Whilst promoting Catholic values and virtues and teaching in accordance with Church teaching, we will ensure that students are offered a balanced programme by providing an RSE programme that offers a range of viewpoints on issues. Students will also receive clear scientific information as well as covering the aspects of the law pertaining to RSE (for example relating to forced-marriage, female genital mutilation, abortion, the age of consent and legislation relating to equality). Knowing about facts and enabling students to explore differing viewpoints is not the same as promoting behaviour and is not incompatible with our College's promotion of Catholic teaching.

We will ensure that students have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.

Governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSE can take place. They want to ensure that pupils can ask questions freely, be confident that their questions will be answered, and be sure that they will be free from bullying or harassment from other children and young people.

### **Controversial or Sensitive issues**

There will always be sensitive or controversial issues in the field of RSE. These may be matter of maturity, of personal involvement or experience of our students, of disagreement with the official teaching of the Church, of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious or harmful activity. The governors believe that students are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the Religion and Philosophy programme. The use of ground rules and expectations, clearly set out by teachers and supported by the college ethos and systems, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion.

There will be times when RSE issues are discussed in curriculum areas, for example, when dealing with controversial plays in Performing Arts, difficult poems in English, or sexuality in Sociology. These will be managed in accordance with the mission and ethos of the College and this policy. Staff are able to seek guidance and advice from our college safeguarding team, the Head of RE, the RP Co-ordinator, the College Chaplain or the EDI Committee Chairperson as required.

Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, e.g. where a student's questioning hints at abuse, is deliberately tendentious or is of a personal nature. Teachers will deal with these in accordance with our annual safeguarding training and will report any concerns to the college safeguarding team.

### **Confidentiality and Advice**

Students need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place. Effective RSE will provide opportunities for discussion of what is and is not appropriate in relationships. Such discussion may well lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue. Teachers will need to be aware of the needs of their students and not let any fears and worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects that a young person is a victim of or is at risk of abuse they are required to follow the College's Safeguarding Policy and immediately inform the college safeguarding team.

### **Delivery**

RSE is delivered through Religion and Philosophy and related lessons are covered in tutorials. There are occasions when individual curriculum areas have to manage issues relating to RSE.

RP teachers are required to complete 'Module 1: Teaching RSHE in a Catholic Context' of the online training provided by the CES.