



## FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Adopted by the Academy Committee	June 2010
Next due for Review	BDES Document

### *Our Mission:*

*Inspired by the life and message of Jesus, and believing that every child is made in the image of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is just like a family, where everyone is welcomed; where everyone is loved, respected and cared for; where everyone is helped to achieve their very best, and where God is at the heart of everything we do.*

### *School Mission Statement*

## 1. Principles

In formulating the school's policy on sex education, the governors have referred to the following:

- The law, as laid out in DfeEE 0116/2000, Sex and Relationship Education Guidance.
- The teachings of the Catholic Church
- The aims of the school, as set out in the school prospectus

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.'

We aim to prepare pupils to cope with the physical and emotional challenges of growing up, and to give them an elementary understanding of human reproduction.

## 2. Aims

Bearing in mind the principles outlined above, and in partnership with parents and carers, the school aims:

- a. To provide information on personal and social education to children throughout the school, appropriate to their age and understanding
- b. To enable children to understand and respect their own bodies
- c. To prepare children for the changes in their own bodies and emotions as they mature and to enable them to understand that this is an ongoing process
- d. To prepare children for adult sexuality in the context of family life and parenthood.

- e. To give children the opportunity to learn, reflect, question and discuss matters relating to sexuality in a safe and sympathetic environment, respecting the views of other people.
- f. To help children establish and sustain healthy friendships and relationships.

### **3. Staff**

Pupils will be taught primarily by teaching staff, but we encourage other valued members of the community (for example, the parish priest and the school nurse) to work with us in a supportive role.

The Academy Committee, through the Curriculum and Ethos Sub-committee, will ensure that appropriate staff training and support are provided.

### **4. Resources**

The Academy Committee will ensure that appropriate resources are provided, within the limits of the school budget.

The Curriculum and Ethos Sub-committee will be responsible for ensuring the selection of resources appropriate for the needs and ages of children, in accordance with legislation and in consultation with the diocese.

### **5. The Curriculum: Content**

The following subjects will be covered

The human body: similarities and differences

Puberty

Besides being given scientific factual information, children will also be taught emotional, moral and social aspects of personal and sexual development, for example:

Self esteem and respect

Respect for others

Rights and responsibilities

Commitment in relationships

Their own feelings about themselves

Images from the mass media

### **6. The Curriculum: organisation**

At St Joseph's we teach sex education through different aspects of the curriculum. While we carry out the main sex education teaching in our personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum, we also teach some family life and sex education through other subject areas (for example, religious education, science and PE), 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.

In PSHE we teach children about relationships, and we encourage children to discuss issues. We teach about the parts of the body and how these work, and we explain to them what will happen to their bodies during puberty. For example we tell the children about voice changes during puberty and explain about menstruation. We encourage the children to ask for help if they need it.

In science lessons, in both Key Stages, teachers teach children about puberty. 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. We ensure that children understand that, though part of the Creation, they are also distinctive and made in the image and likeness of God. 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.

In Years 5 and 6 we place particular emphasis on health education, as many children experience puberty at this age. 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 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.

We arrange a meeting for all parents and carers of children in Year 5 and 6 to discuss the programme of lessons over the next two years, to explain what the issues are and how they are taught and to see the materials the school uses in its teaching.

## **7. The Role of Parents**

The school is well aware that the primary role in children's sex education lies with parents and carers, who willingly promised to bring their children up in the ways of the Catholic faith at their baptism. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective 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 issues 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 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.

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 Principal and make it clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in. The school always complies with the wishes of parents in this regard.

## **8. Confidentiality**

Teachers conduct sex education lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or being 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 in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. If the teacher has concerns, they will draw their concerns to the attention of the Principal or the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will then deal with the matter in consultation with health care professionals.

## **9. Sensitive Issues**

Some issues which are not included in the programme, may be raised by pupils during discussion. Teachers will exercise their discretion and professional judgement in deciding how to deal with these cases, for example, whether to answer a question individually or with the whole class, or whether to redirect the child to their parents. In the last case the teacher will communicate the child's question to their parents, either in writing or orally. This provides a context for any subsequent questions.

## **10. The Role of the Principal and Committee Representatives**

It is the responsibility of the Principal 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 Principal'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.

The Principal liaises with external agencies regarding the school family life and 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.

## **11. Inclusion**

The school will provide effective opportunities for all children in our teaching of family life and sex education. We will:

- set suitable learning challenges
- respond to pupils' diverse learning needs
- overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

## **12. Monitoring and Review**

The Curriculum and Ethos Committee monitors our sex education policy on an annual basis. This committee reports its findings and recommendations to the full governing body as necessary, if the policy needs modification.

The Committee gives serious consideration to any comments from parents about the family life and sex education programme and makes a record of all such comments.

