



ARCHBISHOP
MCGRATH CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS & SEX EDUCATION POLICY

OUR VISION

‘Christ at the Centre’

Our core purpose is to ensure that all pupils reach or exceed their potential by using their God-given talents to develop as healthy, ambitious, capable, life-long learners ready to live as valued members of our local community, Wales and the world.

We aim for all our pupils to leave our school as:
Empowered, Virtuous and Employable individuals,



Formulated by:	Mr B Davies
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We are #teamAMG

1. Vision for Relationship and Sex Education

At Archbishop McGrath we are inspired by Jesus to lead lives that are purposeful and enable us to fulfil our talents. We care for one another and show mutual respect and love through our relationships with one another. Jesus is invited into our lives. In the Beatitudes, Jesus invites us to lead a full life with him by explaining what makes people blessed or happy. Through this we grow in our understanding of how loving our neighbour enables us to be fulfilled too. Such fulfilment can only be truly achieved when we have a good relationship with ourselves, recognising our God-given dignity, which enables us to enter into relationships with other people in our lives, which help us grow and flourish, and we respect that everyone is a unique and beautiful part of God's creation. We are all children of God, created equal and called to grow in love for him through the person of Jesus Christ and to spread the Good News through the work of the Holy Spirit. We are gifted with the love of God and the ability to love others. Our sexuality is part of our total self-gift of the heart and we seek to bring the young people in our care to know the beauty, goodness, and truth of the Church's teaching about how to lead a fulfilled life, a life of integrity and wholeness of body, spirit, and mind as they grow and change from children into young adults.

2. Procedures

The following groups have been consulted as part of producing this policy:

- Staff
- Governing body
- Parent
- Diocesan Education Service
- School council

A copy of this document is available on the school website and can be requested from admin@archbishopmg.co.uk. It will be circulated to all members of staff and Diocesan Director Education/ Director of RE.

3. Rationale

As a Catholic Secondary school in the Province of Cardiff we use the term Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) as we believe that sex education is set within a wider context of relationship education, which itself is about all aspects of growing a fulfilled and happy life. This is why the Diocesan RSE Curriculum, based on the CES 'Model Curriculum,' organizes content in the three overarching themes of 'Created to love by God,' 'Created to love one another' and 'Created to live in community.' Sex education in the narrower sense is but one dimension of this greater whole. For example,

The defining belief of Christianity is that God took on human form. This endows the human person with an extraordinary dignity that goes beyond that of all other forms of life and shows that humanity alone can embrace this relationship with God. Therefore, our relationship with our own bodies is not casual but infused with the Holy Spirit. Any teaching about love and sexual relationships in school must be rooted in this belief which is expressed in the Church's teaching

about relationships, marriage, sex, and family life. The Church educates young people as it is part of complete human formation. Education about human love is no less a part of a Catholic school's responsibility than teaching about any other curriculum subject. At Archbishop McGrath we teach young people about how to form relationships, including understanding loving relationships and acknowledging that young people's first experience of love is in the home. We encourage the young people in our school/college to recognise that they are all children of God and that each person shares a God given dignity. As they mature, we encourage them to follow the example of Jesus and live lives inspired by the Gospel virtues, enabling them to follow His commandment to "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31). We also encourage young people to know that God's love for humanity is so great, he is waiting to forgive us. "We are all sinners, but God heals us with an abundance of grace and mercy." Pope Francis This is the basis for all relationships in our school. Teaching about relationships in our schools is supported by Christian virtue teaching as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Legal guidelines suggest that relationship and sex education should build on the children's own experiences, be sensitive to the specific domestic contexts the children come from, form attitudes and values towards relationships, develop personal and social skills and increase the knowledge and understanding of each young person as they grow about their relationships and well-being, including sexual health. The Province supports all these aims in educating about relationships and sex education by incorporating them into the wider understanding of human relationships and human formation as reflected in our CBEW and CES Guidance.

4. Statutory framework

The statutory framework around education about human relationships varies between England and Wales. The relevant documents can be found here:

a) RSE statutory guidance for Wales:

[https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/cross-cuttingthemes-for-designing-your-curriculum/#relationships-and-sexuality-education-\(rse\):-statutory-guidance](https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/cross-cuttingthemes-for-designing-your-curriculum/#relationships-and-sexuality-education-(rse):-statutory-guidance)

b) Relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) statutory guidance for England:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-andsex-education-rse-and-health-education>

In Wales the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 established the Curriculum for Wales in law and replaced the basic curriculum (which includes, for example, the national and local curricula set out in Part 7 of the Education Act 2002). The Act makes provision about progression and assessment in connection with the curriculum for 3- to 16-year-olds. It also has some limited effects

on the curriculum for learners above compulsory school age at maintained schools. However, much of what currently applies to them is not affected by the Act and does not change.

The Act places duties on:

- School governing bodies and headteachers
- Teachers in charge and management committees of PRUs (pupil referral units)
- The local authority responsible for a PRU (pupil referral units)
- Providers of funded non-maintained nurseries (private nurseries who are funded by the local authority to provide education places)
- Local authorities which make provision for learning and teaching for a learner otherwise than at a school, setting or PRU by virtue of arrangements made under section 19A of the Education Act 1996
- The Welsh Ministers
- The mandatory requirements, or duties, set out in the Act, Codes and other regulations referenced below are also set out in the relevant sections of this framework guidance and are highlighted for clarity

Section 71 of the Act sets out statutory guidance in relation to RSE ; it is designed to assist those responsible under the Act to design RSE as part of the curriculum. This section of the Curriculum for Wales framework contains the RSE Code: this sets out the mandatory learning at developmentally appropriate phases and the supporting statutory guidance: this provides support in developing RSE in a curriculum both as essential learning and as a cross-cutting element in all Areas.

5. Virtues and Values

Gospel virtues and values underpin the RSE curriculum. The Christian tradition describes behaviour or habits that lead to happiness, human flourishing and a closer relationship with God as virtues. These virtues are described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and fall into two groups. The theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (sometimes 'love' is used instead of 'charity') are about developing the habits of being open to the work of the Holy Spirit and developing a deeper relationship with God through living a balanced and good life.

The cardinal virtues of practical wisdom (prudence), justice, fortitude and temperance help people develop habits of reason, fairness, emotional resilience and self-mastery. They are human virtues and, as such, are part of the development of people of all faiths or none as they learn how to flourish, thrive and to have a life supported by strong and caring relationships. The cardinal virtues are drawn from the teachings of Plato and Aristotle and are held in common with people of many faiths and secular beliefs. St. Thomas Aquinas attributes the theological virtues as having their foundation in God, they complete the cardinal virtues and are the way people can reach "the abundant life" (John 10:10). Our schools use the 'Catholic Pupil Profile' as our main tool for formation in virtue in an educational setting.

At the core of our mission is the concept of “EVE (Empowered, Virtuous & Employable)”, we expect that all pupils leave Archbishop McGrath as empowered, virtuous, and employable individuals. By virtuous we wish to embed the Catholic Pupil profile virtues that enable pupils to be:

Grateful for their own gifts, for the gift of other people, and for the blessings of each day; and generous with their gifts, becoming men and women for others

Attentive to their experience and to their vocation; and discerning about the choices they make and the effects of those choices

Compassionate towards others, near and far, especially the less fortunate; and loving by their just actions and forgiving words.

Faith-filled in their beliefs and hopeful for the future.

Eloquent and truthful in what they say of themselves, the relations between people, and the world.

Learned, finding God in all things; and wise in the ways they use their learning for the common good.

Curious about everything; and active in their engagement with the world, changing what they can for the better.

Intentional in the way they live and use the resources of the earth, guided by conscience; and prophetic in the example they set to others.

Through daily interaction and example, with staff and peers and through assemblies led by Wellbeing staff, young people are encouraged to be thoughtful and reflective about their attitudes and behaviour towards themselves and others.

Through the elicited teaching of the empowerment “virtues” pupils are encouraged to develop self-confidence and a level of self-control. Pupils are given opportunities to learn how prayer enables them to make space for God in their lives and offers opportunities for reflection and growth through activities as form classes, during year group and whole school Mass, throughout the RE curriculum and during the year at times of prayerful relevance including November, Lent and Advent. Our Wellbeing and Pastoral structure will enable pupils to explain the choices they make with reference to conscience and a moral framework and to develop an understanding of how to deepen habits of happiness and fulfilment.

6. The Aim and Objectives of RSE

The aim of RSE is part of our aim to educate the complete human person:

The fundamental needs of the human person are the focus of Catholic education – intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual, and eschatological (Our eternal destiny). These fundamental needs can only be truly fulfilled through a rich and living encounter with the deepest truths about God and the human person

This is why Christ and His Gospel must be the foundation of the educational project of each school and college, because He is ‘the perfect Man in whom all human values find their fullest perfection’ (Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*).

Therefore, the Catholic school or college is called to keep the Gospel whole and alive amongst pupils, families, and staff

RSE should therefore deepen the following areas of understanding:

To develop self-knowledge, and respect and love of self;

- To invite young people to develop and deepen a loving relationship with God;
 - To invite young people to understand that their life has a purpose;
 - To invite young people to develop and deepen relationships with each other based on mutual respect and care and to understand this is an expression of God's love;
 - To foster an understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church about how to live a full life, a life of virtue, and the place of human sexuality in living a full life, marriage and parenthood that is appropriate to the stage of maturity of the young people;
 - A strong awareness of their own safety and the nature of appropriate consent;
 - To have an understanding of the law in England and Wales about Equality and Marriage, appropriate to age and maturity.
- We will seek to develop attitudes of awe and wonder for the gift and beauty of self, respect for each other as children of God and rejoice in the goodness of God's creation.
 - We will foster an atmosphere in school which celebrates the work of the Trinity through the life of the school and its relationship with the Church
 - We will teach children about the beauty of the Church's teaching about love and God's love for them which is shared in the Sacraments.
 - We will sensitively share the Church's understanding of the nature of intimacy and the importance of marriage and family life as a way to live in loving relationships with others and with God
 - We will seek to develop attitudes of responsibility towards ourselves and others, recognising the dignity of all.
 - We will seek to enable students to understand the choices they make and how they can help or harm themselves and others
 - We will encourage students to learn about expressing their own emotions and being respectful of the emotions and behaviour of others.
 - We will encourage the whole school to be like a loving family recognising God as a merciful and generous father as Jesus taught in the Lord's prayer.
 - We will encourage everyone in the school to recognise their part in the school family and work together for reconciliation when relationships in the school falter.
 - We will encourage everyone in the school to value humility, mercy and compassion and to respond with empathy to the problems of others.
 - • We will develop students' knowledge of when to say 'no' to behaviours or attitudes that harm their dignity or the dignity of others and to be responsible for managing their own risk.

- We will develop students' experience of what it is to be truly happy so that they begin to understand the difference between happiness and gratification, satisfying the spirit rather than the senses
- We will teach them the virtue of patience
- We will teach students about the media and how to make good choices, about what to watch, what games to play, what rules apply, especially when using social media, and that the dignity of all does not just apply to people who are physically seen, it applies to online relationships too.
- We will encourage students to develop a healthy, good moral framework about accessing information online.
- We will encourage students to recognise the influence of peer pressure and the moral integrity required to say "no".
- We will support students when relationships in their lives are challenging and teach them that there are people in school who will listen if they are experiencing changes that make them frightened or uncomfortable.
- We will teach students about the damage that drugs, alcohol and promiscuity do to relationships with the self, as well as others
- We will teach young people that God is merciful and always waiting for us to be reconciled with him

7. Inclusion

At Archbishop McGrath we identify that young people mature in different ways. Our teaching about relationships and sexuality is respectful of each child's starting point, their faith, culture and background. Lessons are framed by this understanding and young people encouraged to respect each other in their differences and develop an approach of dialogue.

8. Equality

The governing body has wide obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to ensure that Archbishop McGrath endeavours to do its best for all of the pupils, irrespective of ability (physical and mental), race, ethnicity, nationality, maternity, pregnancy, sex, gender identity or orientation or whether they are looked after children.

In the Equality Policy of Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School we underline the fact that everyone is of equal value. Each person is a unique individual with their own special qualities and will be encouraged to develop respect for themselves and everyone with whom they come into contact. In accordance with the belief and teaching of the Catholic Church, the Governors and staff of our school are concerned that equality of opportunity should be offered to all. The principles of the Equality policy apply to all members of the extended school community: pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members. This policy sets out the school's approach to promoting equality, as defined within the Equality Act (2010). It covers sex, race, disability, religion or belief, pregnancy & maternity, sexual orientation or those undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment and the school's statutory duty to produce a Single Equality Scheme.

The Equality Policy statement sets out:

- aims and values
- the school's overall approach to promoting equality, diversity and tackling discrimination
- specific reference to sex, race, disability, gender, age, religion / belief pregnancy & maternity, sexual orientation or those undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment and sexual orientation
- roles and responsibilities
- monitoring, reviewing, and assessing impact

Copies may be found on the school website.

9. Programme of study

The Province recommends appropriate resources to its family of schools in Section 2.1 above. These range from ages 3-19 years and provide suggested areas of study and outcomes for the young people it serves. It is envisaged that this programme will be taught in discreet lessons, in cross-curricular lessons, particularly R.E. and science and fundamentally embedded in the ethos of the school through assemblies, classroom discussions and the centring of all relationships in school on the person of Jesus Christ. The programme of study is based on the understanding of the Church of human nature and human sexuality and aims to help young people develop their sense of purpose and character. It should be taught as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and will thus allow children to express alternative viewpoints where they hold such views.

RSE will be taught in a dedicated lesson each fortnight, at present we use a dedicated programme Ten:Ten – Life to the Full. Staff have had an introductory INSET that included setting ground rules for discussion and all lessons will always take account of the safeguarding policy. Parents have been involved through direct access to the programme with invitation to view an introduction and membership of the Ten:Ten Parental Portal. Progress and understanding will be monitored using the school process of book monitoring and pupil discussion for both RSE and through the RE and Science curriculum. Students' wellbeing will be tracked using existing whole school processes.

10. Parents

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children. Our schools exist to assist parents in this task, which includes RSE. The role of the school is thus that of assisting and completing (where needed) the work of parents, furnishing children and adolescents with an evaluation of "sexuality as value and task of the whole person, created male and female in the image of God". (Educational Guidance in Human Love (1983) Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education n69). Children's first experience of relationships and love are in the home. At our schools we seek to work with parents and support them as their children grow and begin to develop their own character as well as experiencing changes in their physical appearance. Parents have been consulted about this policy before it was ratified by the governing body.

Parents are informed of their right to withdraw their children from RSE lessons, or request their withdrawal, where such a right exists. Where such a right does no longer exist (as under the provisions of the 'Curriculum for Wales'), particular care has been taken to ensure that dialogue and involvement of parents is a priority concern of the school.

Should parents wish to withdraw their child(ren) they must contact the headteacher no later than the start of the school day when the lesson will take place.

The school will involve and support parents in learning about RSE by sharing the programme of study to be used, resources to use at home via the parent portal, information in school prospectus and on school website.

Information about RSE is contained in the school prospectus and the majority of the programme of study is developed through the ethos of the school. However, at times, areas of particular sensitivity, such as puberty, will benefit from additional parental support and at such times, letters will be sent home and parents may be invited into school to discuss the content of RSE lessons.

11. Teaching RSE

Mr B Davies is responsible for leadership, co-ordination and monitoring of the programme. Monitoring also includes a named foundation governor with overall responsibility undertaken by Mr A Howells, Headteacher.

RSE will be taught during dedicated lessons once a fortnight by form tutors, ((with specific topics taught in Science and RE lessons)). Support for the programme will also include Fertile Heart and the school will adopt the Diocesan SOW once finalised

During the course of the programme visitors may be used to supplement study, such visitors will be guided to read the protocol for visitors at Archbishop McGrath and will agree in writing to follow the instructions.

Away from the specific RSE lessons, all staff are involved in fostering attitudes, living Gospel virtues and shaping behaviour based on a Christian understanding of how to lead a good life. Staff are called to be role models of the school's ethos in their relationships with other staff members, their conduct towards parents and their care for the children in the school. Staff who are not Catholic themselves must conduct their behaviour in school in accordance with the vision and mission of the school.

12. Supporting children and young people deemed to be at risk.

The Governing Body desires that RSE lessons take place in a positive framework, where students experience a growing appreciation for their well-being, and that of others, and a deeper understanding that the Church teaches a path of wholeness of mind, body and spirit. Like all other subjects, RSE always needs to be taught in a differentiated manner appropriate to the maturity of the children. It needs to be framed so that the young people who are participating know that there is pastoral support if any of the issues discussed make them feel the need to talk further or share confidential information. Part of this is creating an atmosphere where questions can be asked

openly, knowing that their questions will be answered and knowing that these questions will not be judged negatively by staff or other students. It is vital, therefore, that time is invested in creating this framework of mutual trust and care, whilst respecting personal information. The RSE co-ordinator must be given access to support and training to facilitate teachers to enable such discussions by creating carefully negotiated ground rules and distancing strategies.

The following guidance for dealing with questions in RSE will be adhered to:.

Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting. Many teachers are concerned about responding to unexpected questions or comments from pupils in a whole-class situation. Having a set of ground rules should reduce the chances of this happening but teachers will need support and training so that they are prepared for the unexpected. For example:

- If a question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupil of the ground rules. If the pupil needs further support, the teacher can refer her or him to the appropriate person, such as a school counsellor, school nurse, helpline, or an outside agency or service;
- If a teacher doesn't know the answer to a question, it is important to acknowledge this, and to suggest that the pupil or teacher or both together research the question later;
- If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. In this way, the pupil will feel they have been treated with respect, but the rest of the class will not have to listen to personal experience or inappropriate information. To maintain trust and respect the teacher must remember to talk with the pupil later; and
- If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse, they should follow the school's child protection procedures

(DfE Sex and Relationships Guidance, 4.5 'Dealing with questions' 0116/2000)

Questions asked by students that are a cause for concern for the teacher, for example because of their explicit or graphic content, should be addressed in accordance with the school's safeguarding policy and confidentiality procedures. The school will ensure that this policy is available for all staff, governors, parents and students and the confidential nature of how to obtain advice and guidance as a result of any issues or questions that may arise.

Students will be encouraged to talk to their parents or carers about issues and questions that arise as part of the programme. It will be made clear to all that unconditional confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where illegal or abusive concerns come to light and these will be dealt with under the terms of the relevant policies including Safeguarding and Behaviour.

