



# **Our Lady of Victories**

## **Our approach to Relationships, Sex and Health Education**

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## SCHOOL CONTEXT

Our Lady of Victories is a Catholic, a one-form entry Primary school in central London. Our Mission statement is: *Led by Christ, we learn and grow together in God's family*

Our Catholic values and ethos permeate everything that we offer the children and the writing of all policies. The whole school community works in partnership to provide the best for all the children. Most classes include children with special needs, some with a full Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions, rationale and approach to Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE).

## FORMULATION AND DISSEMINATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document outlines the approaches and philosophy for the teaching of RSHE which fits within the PSHE Curriculum and should be read in conjunction with the PSHE Policy. As a catholic school Relationships and Sex Education requires careful planning. In formulating this document Governors have reflected on the vision which makes our Catholic schools distinctive, as places where our children and young people are given an opportunity to experience living and learning in a community of faith. It reflects the values which are at the heart of education in a Catholic school. As a Catholic school we need to ensure that the curriculum we provide in school reflects the Church's teachings and supports parents in their role as the primary educators of their children.

Governors have the legal responsibility for determining the school's policy with regard to pupils' development in this aspect of their learning. While this means governors have the final decision about policy and programme content, in order to carry out their role governors first undertook a consultation process with staff and parents. The diocesan advisors viewpoints were also part of the discussion through deanery meetings. The Religious Education Coordinator sought the views of colleagues and senior leaders working in local Catholic schools.

After considerable time spent looking at the available options we decided to adopt 'Life to the Full' to deliver the RSHE programme. This resource has been produced by TenTen, a Catholic charitable organisation, whose resources we have used for several years as part of the school liturgy programs.

In producing this new resource they worked closely with the Catholic Education Service to ensure that the contents reflect the Church's values and teachings in addressing issues of sexuality and relationships, while fully complying with the government guidelines.

The resources were carefully evaluated by senior teachers and small team of governors who recommended them to the full governing body. This document was sent to all governors and ratified at the full governing body meeting March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2021.

Parents were then consulted and were given access to this document. Details of the content of the RSHE programme were made available on the school website, along with this policy.

Parents were also able to access the materials to ensure they were fully aware of what was included. As part of this process parents were made aware that they could contribute to how the programme was delivered by offering their views about the timing of delivery in some areas.

It was made clear to parents that once the programme started it would be delivered to all children but parents would have the right to ask for their child to be excluded from two specific lessons in the year 6 programme, should they choose to do so.

Finally, staff were prepared for their role in delivering the materials through INSET delivered using the support materials provided by TenTen. The delivery of the programme was planned to begin in the summer term 2021, after a delay due to the pandemic and its impact on the curriculum.

## **WHAT IS RELATIONSHIP, SEX AND HEALTH 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." RSHE is the lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It teaches the importance of developing respectful and loving relationships. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health.

It is about the development of the pupil's knowledge and understanding of herself or himself as a sexual being, about what it means to be fully human, called to live in positive relationships with self and others and being enabled to make moral decisions in conscience. In primary schools the focus should be on "teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults."

We are legally required to teach those aspects of RSHE which are statutory parts of National Curriculum Science. However, the reasons for our inclusion of an RSHE curriculum go further, as educators in the Catholic faith. We are involved in relationships and sex education 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 school. 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. 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.

RSHE, therefore, will be placed firmly within the context of relationships 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) RSHE will be firmly embedded in the PSHE framework as it is concerned with nurturing human wholeness and integral to the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of pupils.

RSHE will be centred on Christ's vision that being human is good news and will be positive and prudent, showing the potential for development, while enabling the dangers and risks involved to be understood and appreciated.

RSHE will be delivered in accordance with the Church's moral teachings. It will emphasise the central importance of marriage and the family, whilst acknowledging that all pupils have a fundamental right to receive respect whatever family they are part of.

RSHE will also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. The programme promotes those virtues which are essential in responding to the God's call to love others with a proper respect for their dignity and the dignity of the human body. The following virtues will be explicitly explored and promoted: faithfulness, fruitfulness, chastity, integrity, prudence, mercy and compassion.

### **AIMS FOR TEACHING RSHE:**

- To educate our children in relationships, recognising that human sexuality is a gift from God
- To facilitate growth and emotional maturity, helping the children to go beyond themselves towards other people and to have responsibility for their actions.
- To teach children to have compassion and tenderness in accepting difference.
- To engender growth in self-respect and self-worth, recognising that each of us is created in the image of God.
- To explore the meaning and value of life and gain an appreciation of the values of family life.
- To enable pupils to gain an understanding that love is central and a necessary for meaningful friendships.
- To enable pupils to gain an understanding of themselves, their own bodies, their emotional and mental health and well-being, as they grow and change.
- To encourage pupils to be aware of their attitudes and values and have a sense of responsibility for themselves and others.
- To enable pupils to reflect on their relationships and recognise the qualities that help relationships to grow and develop positively.
- To gain an understanding of and to give sensitive consideration to the beliefs, values and cultures of others.
- To offer a climate of support where children know they will be listened to sensitively.
- To correct mis-information.

- To enable pupils to recognise the importance of the choices they make and to take responsibility for the decisions they take.
- To help pupils develop their critical facilities and be aware of the messages conveyed by the media in relation to self-image and sexuality.

## **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES IN TEACHING RSHE**

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;
- Recognising the importance of 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;
- 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 physical and psychological changes that accompany puberty;
- The facts about human reproduction, how love is expressed sexually and how sexual love plays an essential and sacred role in procreation;

## INCLUSION AND EQUALITY OF ACCESS

We will ensure RSHE is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils in respect to pupils' 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 pupils to discrimination. Lessons will also help children 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. Staff and Governors are committed to removing barriers to learning and raising educational achievement for all children at the school. We are committed to equality of opportunity for all members of the school community, regardless of special educational need, disability, nationality or ethnic background, sex, race, pregnancy, maternity, religion and sexual orientation.

## THE RSHE CURRICULUM

### Teaching and Learning

The guidance requires that RSHE is integrated into the core school curriculum timetable, using cross curricular links where these support the children's understanding. Three aspects of RSHE - attitudes and values, knowledge and understanding and personal and social skills will be provided in an inter-related spiral curriculum through the whole school ethos, using cross-curricular opportunities and through a specific relationships curriculum.

The delivery and timetabling of lessons will be a decision made by class teachers. Some of the content will fit most appropriately into PSHE lessons, some may fit better with PE or science lessons about healthy life choices. Lessons around mental health may complement and fit best with mindfulness activities. At different points in the year there may be a whole school focus for a week on topics such as Keeping Healthy or Sports Activity week. The opportunity to make links with the RSHE programme may then be utilised.

The content of the 'Life to the Full' resources for each year group can be taught across a sequence of lessons, which will take place as part of the class curriculum. Lessons will be taught by school staff who have received training and guidance and with whom the children should feel at ease. Children will normally be taught in mixed classes so that they grow up being aware, respectful and sensitive to each other's differences but at key times, such as when puberty is first discussed, children may be taught in same-sex groups.

The support of health professionals may be sought if it's appropriate. A planning session with a member of the teaching staff will always be held with the external speaker before the sessions begin, in order to ensure the suitability of the content. A member of staff will always be present.

Teaching strategies will include: establishing ground rules, discussion, group work and role-play, reflection, experiential, active learning, brainstorming, film & video

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### Confidentiality

Teachers conduct RSHE lessons in a sensitive manner and children should feel able to raise questions and speak about their concerns. If a child makes an observation which suggests they have been exposed in any way which causes concern, the teacher (or other supporting adults) will take the reference seriously and deal with it in line with the school's child protection procedures.

Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been victim of abuse. The teacher will not try to investigate, but will immediately inform the Head-teacher who is the named person for child protection issues. The Head-teacher will deal with the matter following school procedures. (see Child Protection Policy)

### Assessment and recording

As RSHE is statutory there is a requirement to assess children's understanding. We will carry out a before and after activity at the beginning and end of each unit and use this to assess the children's progress in their learning. At the end of the unit of work teachers will reflect on how well it went and any problems which occurred. This will be used to inform the next review of the policy.

## **WORKING WITH PARENTS**

Both the DfE and the Catholic Church recognise that parents are the first educators of their child. As a Catholic school, we provide the principal means by which the Church assists parents and carers in educating their children. The school will support parents and carers by providing material to be shared with their children at home.

Parents will have access to the online Parent Portal developed by TenTen as part of the Life to the Full programme. As part of the initial parent consultation prior to adopting the programme, we asked parents for their views about the three areas which are part of the Sex Education curriculum:

- When the correct terms for genitalia should be introduced
- When puberty should be first taught
- The delivery of an online safety lesson which includes reference to pornography
- The inclusion of two lessons about sexual intimacy

The feedback we received was that parents were happy that the lessons should be included at the times agreed. Names for genitalia will be used in Year 2 as part of the children's learning about the parts of the body. Puberty will be introduced in Year 4 and revisited in upper Key Stage 2. The lesson on what to do if they encounter pornography will be taught in Year 6 as part of children's learning about online safety. Parents also responded positively about the delivery and content of the session which touches on sexual intimacy.

### Parent's rights to withdraw their children

Parents of primary school children have the right to withdraw their child from specific aspects of the Sex Education Curriculum. The only lessons which we plan to deliver are two sessions, one about pornography and one which covers sexual intimacy, both delivered in Year 6. We

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believe that the environment of the classroom is the safest place for these subjects to be delivered.

It is hoped parents will be reassured that it is in their child's best interest to attend these lessons in school. Parents will be informed by letter when the lesson is expected to be covered in order that they can be prepared to talk and answer questions about their children's learning at home. They can also choose if they wish to do so to watch the session at home with their child in advance of the lesson taking place in school.

Should parents wish to withdraw their children from the lesson they are asked to notify the school by contacting the head-teacher. A form to do this is attached at the end of this document.

Please refer to the DfE guidance for further details on the right to be excused from sex education.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING RSHE**

### **Governors**

- draw up the RSHE policy, in consultation with parents and teachers;
- ensure that the policy is available to parents;
- ensure that the policy is in accordance with other whole school policies, e.g. SEN, the ethos of the school and our Christian beliefs;
- ensure that parents know of their right to withdraw their children;
- establish a link governor to share in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including resources used;
- ensure that the policy provides proper and adequate coverage of relevant National Curriculum science topics and the setting of RSE within PSHE.

### **Head teacher**

The Head teacher takes overall delegated responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for liaison with the Governing Body, parents, the Diocesan Schools' Service and the Local Education Authority, also appropriate agencies.

### **PSHE/RSHE Co-Ordinator**

The co-ordinator with the head teacher has a general responsibility for supporting other members of staff in the implementation of this policy and will provide a lead in the dissemination of the information relating to RSHE and the provision of in-service training.

### **All Staff**

RSHE is a whole school issue. All teachers have a responsibility of care; as well as fostering academic progress they should actively contribute to the guardianship and guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of their pupils. Teachers will be expected to teach RSHE in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school. Appropriate training will be made available for all staff teaching RSHE. All staff have been included in the development of this policy and all staff should be aware of this policy and how it relates to them.

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## **SUPPORT FOR STAFF**

### **Children's questions**

The governors want to promote a healthy, positive atmosphere in which RSHE 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 RSHE. These may be matter of maturity, of personal involvement or experience of children, of disagreement with the official teaching of the Church, of illegal activity or other doubtful, dubious or harmful activity. The governors believe that children are best educated, protected from harm and exploitation by discussing such issues openly within the context of the RSHE programme. The use of ground rules, negotiated between teachers and pupils, will help to create a supportive climate for discussion. Some questions may raise issues which it would not be appropriate for teachers to answer during ordinary class time, these can be dealt with later or by suggesting the child discusses them with their parents.

### **Supporting children and young people who are at risk**

Children will also need to feel safe and secure in the environment in which RSE takes place. Effective RSHE 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 e.g., where a child or young person's questions hints at abuse or is of a personal nature. Teachers will need to be aware of the needs of their pupils and not let any fears and worries go unnoticed. Where a teacher suspects that a child or young person is a victim of or is at risk of abuse they are required to follow the school's safeguarding policy and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff responsible for child protection.

### **Confidentiality and advice**

All governors, all teachers, all support staff, all parents and all pupils must be made aware of this policy, particularly as it relates to issues of advice and confidentiality. All lessons, especially those in the RSHE programme, will have the best interests of pupils at heart, enabling them to grow in knowledge and understanding of relationships and sex, developing 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. Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents about the issues which are discussed in the programme.

Teachers will always help pupils facing personal difficulties, in line with the school's pastoral care policy. Teachers should explain to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, in matters which are illegal or abusive for instance. Teachers will explain that

in such circumstances they would have to inform others, e.g., parents, head teacher, but that the pupils would always be informed first that such action was going to be taken

### **Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing this policy**

This policy and its implementation will be monitored and evaluated regularly, to assess the effectiveness of its provision, in line with the school's regular quality assurance. Pupils, staff and parents will be surveyed to obtain feedback about the policy's effectiveness in supporting children in their personal development. The results of the evaluation will be reported to Governors who will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.

The Head-teacher and deputy head-teacher are responsible for monitoring to ensure that there is high quality teaching in RSHE.

Parents can find the [national statutory guidance](#) here.

## Parent Request for Withdrawal from Sex Education Lessons

### TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS

Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

### TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL

Agreed actions from discussion with parents	

