Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Mission Statement

‘Christ is the centre of our school community where we live, love and learn together.’

St Thomas Aquinas School is a Christian community and everyone involved in our community is expected to uphold the Gospel values to help cultivate an atmosphere conducive to learning.

We are committed to developing the full potential of every individual student in an environment of co-operation where all members of the community treat each other with respect and courtesy at all times.

Our core purpose is to create - ‘Committed Learners. Exceptional People.’

RELATIONSHIP AND SEX (RSE) EDUCATION POLICY

1: Introduction

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic school is a VA mixed comprehensive with 1200 students on role. Relationships and sex education is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about 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.

Relationships and sex education will be taught within the context of the teaching of the Catholic Church.

Morals and Values Framework

The Relationships and Sex programme at St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is firmly rooted in the belief that:

1. Each person in our school community is a unique individual created by God.
2. Each person should be encouraged to fulfil his or her potential spiritually, morally, academically, creatively, socially and physically.
3. Each person should be helped to develop an appreciation of the wonder of creation, of human achievements and aspirations and the interdependence of individuals, groups, communities and nations. (Mission Statement)

The programme aims to foster the holistic development of all students based on Christian principles and in all respects conforms to Catholic teaching.
The Governing Body of St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School acknowledges its statutory duties to provide Sex Education for all students in accordance with the Education Act 1996 (Section 352). It welcomes the support provided in the DfES Circular *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance*, July 2000 and its recognition that schools of a particular religious ethos may choose to reflect their faith beliefs in their relationship and sex education policy and delivery. The Governing Body is aware of advice regarding Healthy School standards and ensures this is incorporated into the delivery of RSE. St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School achieved Healthy Schools status in April, 2007.

The Governing Body recognises that parents are the key people in teaching their children about relationships, sex and family life and aims to support the work of parents in their area in the RSE Programme.

The Programme being followed in RE is that of the Diocese of Birmingham *All That I Am*.

**Statutory Requirements**

The law requires that maintained secondary schools teach sex education, human growth and reproduction including education about sexually transmitted infections as set out in the National Curriculum. It also requires that any relationships and sex education is provided in a way that encourages students to consider the value of family life.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from sex education lessons. The Health education co-ordinator will send out a letter before a unit is taught.

2. **Aims**

RSE aims to teach a pattern of moral reasoning and will:

- help students come to an understanding of themselves and others as fully human
- enable young people to learn what the Church teaches and build bonds of trust and communication with each other
- augment students’ understanding of their physical and emotional development
- promote ways in which young people can examine contemporary stereotypes of masculine and feminine behaviour and assume responsibility for their actions
- help students develop the confidence and skills to discern messages in the media and the positive and negative effects of peer pressure, enabling them to make decisions about how to act in accordance with their own beliefs and values

**KS3 Learning Objectives**

Students will learn:

- to recognise the features of healthy friendships
- to recognise what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in a relationship
- to understand the family in its social context and examine the roles and responsibility of family members
to understand the spiritual context of the family as a community where members can grow in faith, hope and love

to understand that the family provides in most cases the best loving and secure support for the balanced development of the child

to explore the physical and emotional changes that take place at puberty

to understand the biological process of reproduction

to explore issues of self-worth, respect for others, peer pressure and influence of the media on body image

to identify different types and forms of separation and understand that separation and loss from those we love is often a natural and necessary part of life

to acknowledge that love cannot be easily separated from anxiety and suffering and appreciate that for believers God accompanies them in times of joy and sorrow

to identify their own opinions based on their experience of relationships and marriage and explore the media portrayal of relationships and marriage

to explore the teaching of the Catholic Church on marriage to appreciate that sexual intercourse is the deepest and most intimate sign of human love

to understand that parents are co-creators with God and that each person is unique at conception and therefore worthy of respect

Key Stage 4 Learning Objectives

Students will learn:

- to examine the characteristics nature and intent of disposable and permanent lifestyles and behaviour, and to understand why people opt for certain life choices
- to understand that certain choices can entail undesirable outcomes, such as sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV and abortion
- to examine the nature, range and consequences of addictive behaviour such as eating disorders, alcohol and drug abuse
- to reprise how loss and bereavement affect the behaviour of the individual and how loss and bereavement affects society
- to reprise and to be able to understand male and female physical development and self-awareness
- to understand contraception, to be able to distinguish between natural and artificial methods, and to understand that some methods are abortifacient
- to understand the Church’s teaching on contraception and family planning
- to be able to demonstrate that the life skills they have learnt are likely to inform their future decision-making
- to be able to know and understand what human and divine and skills are required in order to sustain a happy marriage, which is life-long and life-giving
- to be able to understand homosexuality, examine why prejudice and discrimination is harmful and learn to respect all people
- to identify what a baby needs and the role of conditional and unconditional love in parenthood
- to know how a baby will affect personal life choice and relationships and to understand the changed priorities and responsibilities of the parent
- to explore how the nature of parenthood changes as the child grows and develops

KS5 learning objectives
• to recognise the value and presence of an informed conscience
• to apply the principles arising from an informed conscience
• to appreciate and evaluate the impact of the Church’s moral teaching upon personal beliefs, attitudes and conduct
• to understand the moral teaching of the Church on life, and related issues, and how this can conflict with values in daily life
• to apply, and use, the available tools of Christian living to their own moral stance and lifestyle
• to reprise and reflect on the Church’s teaching on conscience, personal beliefs, values and attitudes, and to develop a life pattern that incorporates regular self-review

3. Organisation

The Programme is:

• Co-ordinated by the Heads of Citizenship, Science and RE faculties and the Health Education co-ordinator. It is the role of the Health Education co-ordinator to ensure that the teaching across the faculties supports the teaching of the Catholic Church.
• Extends over all year groups in the school, is progressive in structure and endeavours to match the capacities and meet the various needs of all students
• Taught by teachers who are fully supportive of it and who teach it with a sense of integrity and sensitivity
• Concerned with exploring knowledge and understanding, attitudes, values and skills around a range of topics using teaching methods which encourage reflection and discussion, project and group work.

Appropriate on-going training is sought for all teachers delivering the programme.

The school is aware that difficult issues will need to addressed and will do so according to the teaching of the Catholic school and guidance from the CES.

Students will be organised in form and class groups for the delivery. SRE will be delivered by a specialist teacher across all key stages.

4. Curriculum Planning

Planning and resource management will be organised by the Heads of RE/Citizenship and Science Faculties. The syllabus is used to deliver the programme according to the appropriate age group, and developed into a Scheme of Work to show short, medium and long-term planning.

5. Learning & Teaching Styles

This will incorporate the most appropriate style for the topic and age of the students and will ensure key skills and the inclusion of all students in line with our Inclusion Policy. The Aquinas Learning Cycle is the model which will be followed in all schemes of work.

6. Assessment and Monitoring

Assessment for learning will be made and records kept, as in line with School Assessment Policy, for reporting to parents.

The programme will be regularly evaluated in line with good practice of planning, teaching and assessment.
The Head of Citizenship and Health Education co-ordinator will meet annually with the Pastoral Committee of the Local Academy Committee to monitor and review the policy and practice

7. Specific Issues  Access to sanitary wear
Sanitary wear can be accessed from the school nurse in her office. Supplies are also kept in the main school office

8. Counselling and Confidentiality
Whilst giving advice to students about personal problems is an integral part of the school’s pastoral support system, teachers should encourage students to discuss their concerns with regard to sexual activity with their parents. When students express a desire or even give a subtle indication that they wish to confide in a member of staff regarding matters of a sexual nature, teachers cannot promise confidentiality.

They should inform the student beforehand that they may have to disclose the content of such conversation to other significant senior staff whose responsibility it is to take action, eg. informing parents or other appropriate agencies. When in doubt, staff must seek advice from the Deputy Head with responsibility for Child Protection.

9. Liaison with Parents
Parents are consulted on the content of the RSE Programme (a summary of which is included in the School Prospectus each year). Copies of the full statement are available on request. Under the 1993 Education Act, parents have the right to withdraw their children from the programme that is outside the compulsory elements of relationships and sex education that is contained in the science National Curriculum. Parents wanted to exercise that right are asked to make an appointment to meet the Assistant Head with oversight of the year group to discuss the issues, although they are under no obligation to do so. Once a child has been withdrawn, they cannot take part in the later relationships and sex education without parental approval. If parents request for their child to be withdrawn they will be supervised in the ARC (school library) and complete appropriate work related to the topic.

9. Confidentiality and Advice
Students will be made aware that some information cannot be held in confidence and if certain disclosures are made action will ensue.

Students will be offered sensitive and appropriate support. With reference to disclosure or suspicion of possible abuse the senior member of staff with responsibility for Child Protection will be informed.

10. External speakers
When external speakers are used to assist with any aspect of the programme they must:
- Be thoroughly briefed and understand the values/guiding principles of the school policy
• Be aware of how their contribution fits into the overall scheme of work
• Make a contribution, which is consistent with the school policy and educational practice.

11. Consultation Process

In drafting this policy the Governors have considered the views of staff, parents and students. Religious Educators and Health advisors have also been part of the consultation group so that an effective and helpful programme can be made available to all students.

Approved by the LAC on: 21.9.17

Signed:

Chair of the LAC

Annual review Autumn 2018