



# **Human Relationships and Sex Education Policy for Our Lady's Catholic College**

## **Vision and Mission.**

### **Live, Love, Learn in a Caring Catholic Community**

At Our Lady's Catholic College we are inspired by Jesus to give all members of the community the gift of a holistic education that enables them to live life to the full by:

Helping them grow in knowledge and wisdom

Helping them develop a sense of awe and wonder so that their spirituality can grow and so they can respect creation

Treating all with dignity to raise their self-worth so they can appreciate the worth of others in and beyond our community

Calling them into a life of love with Christ

This vision for our school is especially important for our Human Relationships and Sex Education. In helping our young people to grow in wisdom we encourage them to make life enhancing decisions that will positively impact on all the relationships they make. These decisions are what enable us, as humans, to be truly happy, a happiness that is sustained and is not based on ephemeral pleasures.

We aim to help them develop a sense of awe and wonder which will enable our young people to grow as they have numinous experiences that deepen their relationship with God and so deepen their spirituality.

Treating all with God-given dignity will raise our young people's self-worth, which in our current age can often be so low. We endeavor to teach our young people that they are made in God's image and so are special and unique, which will help them to grow in confidence and appreciate their God-given gifts and talents. In recognizing their own dignity they will be able to appreciate that of others and so enables them to enter into loving relationships that will bring them true happiness. 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 as they grow and change from children into young adults.

Lastly, we endeavor to call our young people into a life of love with Christ. As children of God grow in love for him, they are able to use the gift of the Holy Spirit to spread the Good News through their acts of charity and faithfulness in and beyond our community.

## **Procedures**

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

- staff
- governing body
- parents
- Diocesan Education Service
- school nurse
- GIFT group
- students

During 2017 all staff attended an INSET session led by Dr Nancy Wallbank that introduced them to the principles of an HRSE policy. An HRSE working group, made up of staff from RE, Science, Pastoral support, Chaplaincy, Sixth form leaders and the Headteacher, met to review our current practice and to write the new policy. Children were consulted by showing them the draft policy. A group of parents were sent the draft policy and asked to comment.

In consultation with the Governing Body, the policy will be implemented in September 2017, reviewed every (two years), by the Head teacher, HRSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and school Staff. The next review date is (September 2019).

The policy will be circulated to all members of the Governing Body and all members of staff. The school prospectus should contain a statement about HRSE teaching and details of where to obtain a full copy of the policy upon request. The Education Service will be sent a copy of the school's HRSE policy and it is the duty of the Governing Body to ensure that this is up to date.

## Rationale

As a maintained school in the Diocese of Lancaster Education Service, we use the term Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) as it believes that relationships education is about all aspects of growing a fulfilled and happy life, sexual education is a dimension of this greater whole.

The defining belief of Christianity is that God took on human form. This endows the human form 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 offers education to young people as it is part of complete human formation. Education about human love is no less a part of a Catholic schools responsibility than teaching about any other curriculum subject. At (name of school) 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 and in line with 'Fit for Mission? Schools'.

The Department for Education (2000) suggests that sex and relationship 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 Diocese of Lancaster supports all these aims in educating about relationships and sex education though recognises that the Church's objectives in this are about complete human formation.

## Statutory framework.

The statutory framework that surrounds education about human relationships largely falls within three key areas.

- The National Curriculum (2014)

Statutory Guidance: 'Sex and Relationships Education Guidance' (2000)

- The Children's Act (2004)

Additionally, non-statutory guidance directs policy and guides the work of OFSTED as it seeks to promote what is perceived as best practice, which may go beyond the limits of statute.

	State Funded Maintained Schools	Academies and Free Schools
Whole Curriculum	Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based* and which: -promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; -prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.	
Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education	Department for Education: All schools should make provision for PSHE, drawing on best practice. Schools are free to develop their own PSHE programme to reflect the needs of their pupils.	
Sex and Relationships Education	Statutory for secondary aged children to have sex education that includes HIV, Aids and other sexually transmitted infections	
Sex and Relationships Education Guidance	Any school that provides SRE has a statutory duty to have due regard to Sex and Relationships Education Guidance DEE 2000	
National Curriculum	Statutory sex education forms part of the science programmes of study across Key Stages 1-3.	
Sex and Relationships Education Policy	DEE Guidance (2000) states that all schools should have an up to date SRE policy available for inspections and on request for parents or carers.	SRE policy is advisable but not compulsory

## Virtues and Values

Gospel virtues and values underpin the HRSE curriculum. The Christian tradition describes behaviours 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 happy, 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). At Our Lady’s Catholic College we live out the Gospel values shared in the Beatitudes, throughout the life of school by placing Christ at the centre of all that we do. The staff, teaching and non-teaching, are true witnesses to Gospel values and their strong relationships with the children in our care reflect this.

Our behavior for learning policy focuses our students on the correct way to behave and our rules are based around the acronym FAITH so that they link their behavior with our lives as Christians. The policy requires restorative justice meetings for when relationships have been damaged by pupil or staff behaviour. This requires staff and students to reflect on why they behaved this way and what the consequences of their actions were. It is important that at these meetings it is made clear that following an apology we now move forward to rebuild the relationship and that the person is forgiven. If a student has behaved in a way that means they have a period in the Internal Exclusion Unit they begin that time with a reflection sheet for them to think about their behavior and how they can make sure the behavior is not repeated.

In our prayer and liturgy we talk to our young people about Gospel values and how we use Christ’s teachings to inform us of the best way to live our lives.

The establishment of our GIFT (Growing Faith Together Team) has resulted in many young people being confident to plan and deliver prayer, liturgy and workshops for our students and primary students. They are strong witnesses to faith at Our Lady’s and the group continues to grow in size.

Our students show a remarkable capacity to care for others. The social action within school is especially impressive in a school with such high levels of social deprivation amongst its students. They are tireless in raising money for a range of charities including local causes e.g. St John’s Hospice, Olive Branch food bank and the Life Group, and national and international charities e.g. CAFOD, Cancer Research and a number of schools in Uganda that we support. Students understand that they are called to do this work as Christians.

Each year group experience an Ethos Day during which they are given the time and space to consider different topics. E.g. Building Community, Reconciliation, Faith in Action, Choosing good relationships and Should I stay or should I go? Exploring the refugee crisis in a number of countries.

Staff run a Rainbows group for those students who have suffered bereavement of any kind, including those who have suffered a breakdown of relationships at home.

Students are encouraged to pray in different ways. Through daily collective worship students are able to express their belief in God in an atmosphere that is free from criticism. Using the principles of the Quiet Mind project, students are encouraged to use silence to make space for God and reflection.

## The Aim and Objectives of HRSE.

The aim of HRSE is part of our wider aim to educate the complete human person. This is expressed in *Fit for mission? Schools* (2009).

*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.*

HRSE should deepen the following areas of understanding.

- To develop self-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 can be 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.
- A strong awareness of their own safety and the nature of consent.
- To have an understanding of the law in England about Equality and Marriage, appropriate to age and maturity.

HRSE will develop attitudes, personal and social skills and knowledge and understanding.

- 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 teaching about 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 in 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 behaviours 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 their 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 their own 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 and alcohol can 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.

## **Inclusion**

At Our Lady's Catholic College 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 sexual orientation. Lessons are framed by this understanding and young people encouraged to respect difference and develop an approach of dialogue. Learning Support Assistants provide additional support to students within PSHE sessions and in RE and Science lessons. The Learning Support Department also offer support outside of lessons through nurture and ASD groups where students are encouraged to learn about the possible

outcomes of the choices they make.

Pupils requiring or requesting extra support, for example because they are transgender, will be treated with dignity and respect and offered support through our pastoral team, our Chaplaincy team and through seeking appropriate help from other agencies. Students will be encouraged to talk to their families about relationships and seek their advice and support too.

## Equality

The governing body has wide obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to ensure that Our Lady's Catholic College 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.

These obligations are laid out in the Our Lady's Catholic College Single Equalities Policy July 2012 found on the OLCC website.

## Programme of study

The Diocese of Lancaster has a programme of study for its family of schools. The programme ranges from ages 2-19 years and provides 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 teachings of the Church 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 allow children to express alternative beliefs and viewpoints where they hold such views. The programme of study will be supported by published resources, recommended by the Diocese, as well as those created by the school. A list of recommended resources is available on the Education Service website.

At Our Lady's Catholic College HRSE is taught in PSHE, RE and science lessons. A wide range of teaching strategies are used and all staff will receive training on the delivery of HRSE. Lessons involve the establishment of clear ground rules for discussion. Parents are informed at the start of Year 7 about how HRSE is taught in school and lessons always take account of the school's safeguarding policy which can be found on the OLCC website.

Progress and understanding is monitored through regular assessment in Science and RE in addition to monitoring of PSHE work. Pupils' well-being is monitored by the pastoral team and our behavior for learning policy.

## Parents

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children. The school should support parents in this task. The role of the school should be that of assisting and completing 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) Students' 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. A group were shown the policy and asked for their comments.

Parents are informed of their right to withdraw their children from HRSE lessons, however, they are not able to withdraw their children from statutory science lessons.

Should parents wish to withdraw their child(ren) they must contact the Progress Leader 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 HRSE by sharing the programme of study on the website, letters when visitors are coming to school, letters when a sensitive subject is to be taught, information will be in school prospectus and on school website.

Information about HRSE is contained in the school prospectus and the majority of the programme of study is developed through the ethos of the school and in PSHEE, RE and science. However, at times, areas of particular sensitivity may benefit from additional parental support.

## Teaching HRSE

At Our Lady's Catholic College the Headteacher Helen Seddon is the member of staff responsible for this policy and line management of the HRSE Co-ordinator.

Second in Religious Education, David O'Kane is the HRSE Co-ordinator.

The Governor who chairs the Well-being Committee of Governors, Wyn Lambert, is the link Governor for HRSE

At Our Lady's Catholic College the teaching of the Programme of Study will be taught in PSHE lessons in Year

7 and on Enrichment Days in all years. Part will be covered in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 Religious

Education and Science. In Key Stage 5 HRSE will be taught in general RE and through Enrichment Days.

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.

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

The Governing Body desires that HRSE 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. 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 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 HRSE 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 Department for Education (2000)

offers the following guidance for dealing with questions.

*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.*

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

Sensitive subjects in HRSE always need 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. This should always be done within the safeguarding framework of the school and it is paramount that all staff teaching HRSE have up to date safeguarding professional development.

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. This information is found in the Child Protection policy found on our website.

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 Safeguarding policy and the Child Protection policy.

Policy adopted

Policy to be reviewed summer term 2019