

St Richard's Catholic College

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY



This policy was redrafted following consultation with: Pastoral Care Team, Diocese, School Council, Leadership and Management Team and Parental Focus Group.

This Policy was approved by the Governing Body: September 2018

Chair of Governors: _____

The Governing Body will review the policy in September 2019

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENT

Our aim at St Richards is to grow as a community in the love of God who is revealed to us through his Word in the Bible and in the traditions of the Church. We believe that:

We are all unique,
created in God's image
and called to work for the common good.

This policy outlines the College's approach to relationships and sex education (SRE). It is underpinned by our Catholic ethos whilst also understanding the context which our young people live it. It reflects the Gospels and teaching of the Church, particularly the following two concepts:

The dignity and worth of each person made in the image and likeness of God.
The importance of individuals coming together in mutual support and regard, to live and work for the good of humankind and the glory of God.
cf Catechism of the Catholic Church 1878ff

"Sex and relationship education is lifelong learning about sex, sexuality, emotions, relationships and sexual health. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes. Sex and relationship education should empower young people, build self-esteem, offer a positive ... view of sex and support... mutual respect."

(DfEE Relationships and Sex Guidance 2000)

Introduction

"The Second Vatican Council spoke of the need for "a positive and prudent sex education" to be imparted to children and adolescents "as they grow older," with "due weight being given to the advances in the psychological, pedagogical and didactic sciences." ... It can only be seen within the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving. In such a way, the language of sexuality would not be sadly impoverished but illuminated and enriched. The sexual urge can be directed through a process of growth in self-knowledge and self-control capable of nurturing valuable capacities for joy and for loving encounter."

In a Catholic school any teaching or formation on human love and human development must be within the whole context of our faith in God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ, as it is through our love of God and of neighbour that we reciprocate God's love for mankind. As the term 'Relationship and Sex Education' (RSE) indicates, the emphasis is placed on the understanding and formation of respectful, loving relationships which exist between friends and within families.

Marriage is one such loving relationship. The Church's sacramental understanding of marriage explains how we can meet Christ through the adventure of learning to love one another. Pope Francis tells us that "Christian marriage is a sign of how much Christ loved his Church in the covenant sealed on the cross, yet it also makes that love present in the communion of spouses". He then explains that "the sacrament of marriage flows from the incarnation and the paschal mystery, whereby God showed the fullness of his love for humanity by becoming one with us."

Marriage is a mutual commitment of total fidelity which is open to the gift of life. Understanding how relationships work and developing relationship skills gives a context for understanding human sexuality and sexual health. This is consistent with the Church's view that the purpose of RSE is to secure "an adequate knowledge of the nature and importance of sexuality and of the harmonious and integral development of the person towards psychological maturity, with full spiritual maturity in view, to which all believers are called."

Reference will also be made to 'Sex and Relationship Education' (SRE) where connections are made to documents from Government and other sources. The Department for Education (DfE) have a similar interpretation in their guidance documents, which state that SRE is "lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about understanding the importance of marriage and family life, stable loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health."⁵

Our college Mission statement commits us to developing *"a fully rounded curriculum that encourages all to challenge and serve a society that is religiously, racially and culturally diverse"*.

Sex and Relationship Education in a Catholic School must be part of the whole developmental process whereby the pupils are prepared for life as adults and helped to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially and morally, while also coping with physical changes. Their consciences should be informed and they should understand the consequences of their decisions in regard to relationships and sex.

SRE has a clear moral frame-work within which the primacy of Catholic teaching and values is emphasised at all times. All aspects of the course are treated with sensitivity and discretion.

The focus of SRE at St Richard's is on relationships and at the heart of the programme is the Christian reverence for life and the recognition that human sexuality is a gift from God.

The Governors recognise that it is their duty to provide a programme of Sex and Relationship Education for pupils which supports parents in their key role as teachers in this.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The statutory requirements relating to SRE are contained within different parts of United Kingdom legislation. They can be summarised as follows.

- All maintained primary and secondary schools must teach the SRE elements of the National Curriculum Science Order.
- All maintained secondary schools must provide SRE as part of the basic curriculum, including as a minimum education about HIV, AIDS and STIs and the national curriculum content about human growth and reproduction.
- In the primary phase SRE is currently optional in Key Stages One and Two. There are statutory elements in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- All maintained primary and secondary schools must have an up to date policy for SRE, even if the policy (in the primary phase) is not to provide such a programme.

- Parents have a right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex education provided, but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction as required by the National Curriculum Science Order.
- When providing SRE all schools must have regard for the Sex and Relationship Education Guidance published in 2000.

Fuller details are given in the Appendix.

There continues to be discussion within Government and in Parliament on SRE. Further legislation may make SRE compulsory at all Key Stages.

Although legislation currently allows Governing Bodies in primary schools to have a policy of not teaching RSE, it is the school's view that RSE is an important part of the partnership between parents and schools and should be part of the curriculum at St Richard's Catholic College.

ROLES

PARENT

"Sex education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must always be carried out under their attentive guidance, whether at home or in educational centres chosen and controlled by them. In this regard, the Church reaffirms the law of subsidiarity, which the school is bound to observe when it cooperates in sex education, by entering into the same spirit that animates the parents".

The Church recognises that parents are the first teachers of their children. It is their right and responsibility to inform and educate their children in matters relating to human relationships and sexual development. Catholic schools help parents in this task and seek to work in partnership with them. Parents are consulted whenever the school's RSE policy is reviewed. They are given the opportunity to discuss the content of any programme of RSE that will be delivered and resources that are planned to be used.

Details about the parental right to withdraw from some aspects of RSE are detailed in the Appendix on page 9.

GOVERNORS

The 1996 Education Act places responsibility for the school's policy on RSE in the hands of the Governing Body. They are required to ensure that there is an up to date RSE policy that is available for parents to read and that the policy is consistent with other relevant whole school policies (e.g. SEND; Safeguarding; Anti-Bullying; Pastoral Care). Foundation Governors are appointed by the Archbishop to promote and safeguard the Catholic character of the school. They have a particular responsibility to ensure that the RSE policy for the school complies with Diocesan policy, directives, and guidance regarding RSE.

PRINCIPALS

Responsibility for the implementation of the RSE policy is delegated to the Principal, in liaison with the governors, parents, Diocesan Education Commission and the Local Authority. It is the task of the Principal to integrate RSE into the curriculum.

RSE LEADER/COORDINATOR

An appropriately trained RSE Leader/Coordinator has been appointed to oversee curriculum planning, Continuing Professional Development, training and support for teachers. With governors and the Principal, this person ensures that there is a planned process for informing parents about RSE in the school. Elements of RSE will be delivered in different curricula areas. One element of good practice which is to be adopted is to establish a cross curricula liaison group to support the RSE Leader/Coordinator.

TEACHERS AND OTHER ADULTS

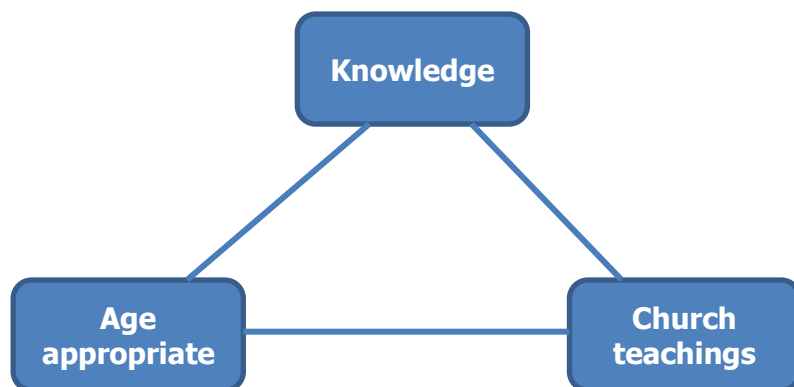
Relationship and Sex Education is a whole school issue. All staff are involved in developing the personal and social skills that contribute to human flourishing. As well as delivering curriculum content in the classroom, staff are also role models around the school, giving examples of conflict resolution and establishing relationships of mutual trust and respect. All staff have a responsibility of care and safeguarding of pupils. They should actively contribute to guidance of the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of their pupils. This work must be in line with the school's Catholic ethos and current legislation.

THE AIM OF RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION ON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

"Sex education should provide information while keeping in mind that children and young people have not yet attained full maturity. The information has to come at a proper time and in a way suited to their age."⁸

To provide children and young people with a "positive and prudent sexual education"⁹ which is compatible with their physical and psychological maturity. Effective RSE in Catholic schools must be designed around three cornerstone principles, namely that:

1. Pupils need clear, accurate and sound knowledge
2. Church teachings are presented in a forthright and clear manner, using the specific references provided by the Church
3. In presentation of both knowledge and Church teachings, age appropriateness and the awareness of child development is key. Instruction should match the child's developmental level and, as with all learning, be aware of individual differences.



The aims of SRE in St Richard's are:

- to develop in pupils a sense of their own self-worth and uniqueness as created by God
- to enable all pupils to develop a positive self-image and positive attitudes towards sexuality, independent of peer group pressure
- to encourage the pupils to have respect for themselves and others
- to develop good relationships and respect the differences between people allowing for an appreciation of the different types of family
- to ensure that all pupils receive adequate factual information regarding their own and others' sexual development and lifestyle
- to develop an awareness of an individual's legal context regarding sexual behaviour
- to educate the pupils in the responsible management of relationships and help them to overcome any prejudices and misunderstandings they may have about sexuality
- to teach pupils about the importance of love and respect in relation to all relationships and especially sexual relationships and to set this in the context of family life and marriage
- to give opportunities for pupils to discuss and learn about sensitive topics that could affect them and others and to know where to go to get help and support for themselves and others (including such topics as consent, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation).

This is taught in a sequential programme appropriate for each age group.

THE OBJECTIVES OF RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- To provide children and young people with a knowledge and understanding of the Church's teaching on relationships and sexual love
- To provide children and young people with a positive understanding of what constitutes good, loving relationships
- To provide children and young people with a knowledge and understanding of the biological facts about human reproduction
- To provide children and young people with the skills and confidence to defend themselves against unwanted pressures to be sexually active and to keep them safe

CONFIDENTIALITY AND CHILD PROTECTION

The college's confidentiality policy must be adhered to by all involved in this aspect of the curriculum. Regular reminders to teaching staff, parents and carers on the policy and how it works in practice are essential. Pupils should also be reminded that teachers and other adults in a classroom setting cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Pupils should be made aware about when and how to disclose confidential information and what constitutes such information.

Prior knowledge by staff on personal information concerning a pupil should be shared in a manner that reflects the best interest of the child. Staff receiving such information should respect the confidential nature of it.

Members of staff who gather information on matters involving pupils having sexual relations or other relevant issues or should refer the matter to the Safeguarding Lead Teacher or her deputies in college. Referrals, if thought appropriate, can then be made to relevant agencies e.g. school nurse and relevant counselling given. The best interest of the child is taken into account at all times in such situations.

CHOOSING AND USING RESOURCES, WORKING WITH EXTERNAL SPEAKERS

Relationship and Sex Education must be in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church. It is the responsibility of the Governing Body, working with the Principal and Senior Leadership Team, to ensure that this is achieved through careful monitoring of the teaching resources used. In considering the resources which will be used for RSE, governors should take into account:

- The need to support parents and carers by providing education which is faithful to the teachings of the Church and appropriate for the ages and stages of development of the pupils;
- The extent to which specific materials can be used to illustrate the beauty of the human being created by God;
- The values implied by specific resources and the way in which they may be used to enhance pupils' understanding of human development and Catholic teaching;
- The accuracy and clarity of material presented.

It is important that any external visitor to the school is also clear about their role and responsibility while they are in a school. Such visits should complement the school's current programme. Visitors may need guidance to ensure that sessions they deliver are respectful of the teaching of the Catholic Church. Further guidance on working with external visitors can be found in the Education Commission's document *Guidance on visitors and external speakers working with pupils in Catholic schools in the Diocese*. Available at <http://www.educationcommission.org.uk/> and should be consulted before inviting external agencies or visitors into the school.

CURRICULUM

All staff in the college are responsible in some measure for the successful delivery of a co-ordinated sex and relationship education programme as all are concerned with helping the pupils develop healthy relationships, but some staff and departments have a major contribution to make through the content of their curriculum. The R.E., Science and PSHEe/Citizenship education and Humanities syllabuses in particular will reflect different aspects of the topic at each stage of a pupil's career. Every care has been taken to ensure that there is continuity and progression and that the subject-matter is suited to each age group. There is ongoing liaison between all staff involved at all times. In PSHEe the schemes of work are led by the Pastoral leader for that year group and delivered by tutors. It is overseen by the Subject Co-ordinator and the Vice-Principal responsible for this area.

METHODOLOGY

The manner of delivery will be warm, factual and safe and, in a spirit of openness, questions should be allowed to surface and be answered clearly and frankly, as appropriate. A variety of teaching and learning styles should be used for the delivery of the Relationships and Sex Education - drama and discussion can be used effectively to explore issues and DVDs and ICT resources are a valuable starting point. The focus should be on active learning. Some pastoral staff may feel more comfortable with a team-teaching approach or the operation of a rotational system and specialist teachers are used in these cases. The programme is reviewed at Pastoral Care meetings and pupils who may be affected by the content are highlighted enabling sensitive issues to be handled in an appropriate way without causing distress. Staff are also encouraged to avail of inset opportunities as they arise. The induction of new staff must be planned, especially if they are not familiar with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Outside agencies and visiting speakers are a valuable resource, provided their brief is clear and the ground has been thoroughly prepared beforehand. The college will work to the recommended Sex and Relationship Guidelines (2003) issued by the East Sussex County team in respect to visitors delivering aspects of the curriculum and 2000 DfE SRE guidance.

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE ISSUES AND RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS

Teachers will answer questions honestly but with due regard given to the nature of the question and the age and maturity of the questioner. In some cases it may be inappropriate for the teacher to respond to a specific question and the pupil may be referred to his/her parents following a discussion with the Safeguarding Lead Teacher or deputies. In the same way not all questions will be answered publicly and the teacher will need to assess the appropriateness of the question to consider if it matches the maturity and understanding of the whole class group.

Pupils have a range of support services in-house and signposted in the journal to support issues that may arise.

It is not appropriate for teachers to discuss their personal views or experiences encouragement should be given to discuss these within the home, as appropriate.

CONCLUSION

The context of all SRE in St Richard's is the growth of the individual as a whole person, who lives in relationship with others. It is based on sound Christian educational principles and is modified as required in our rapidly changing world through a process of review and evaluation.

SRE is co-ordinated by the PSHEe subject co-ordinator. She is responsible for the overall planning, implementation and review of the programme across all year groups. She monitors the planning and delivery of content, provides appropriate resources, offers guidance and support in the delivery and assessment of SRE.

The PSHEe Co-ordinator in line with other curriculum areas will endeavour to keep up-to-date with materials and guidance for SRE. She may lead, organise or inform staff and the wider school community of training and current issues.

She liaises with external support agencies to encourage consistency and understanding in the school's SRE programme.

REFERENCES:

DfEE Relationships and Sex Education;

The Catholic approach to Relationships and sex Education – Bishop Malcolm McMahon, March 2010;

Sex and Relationship Education: Guidance for East Sussex.

Appendix I

Detailed notes on the statutory requirements for Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in England as at February 2016

The key points of the Education Act 1996 (Sections 403 and 405) which consolidated all previous legislation are:

- All maintained primary and secondary schools must teach the sex and relationship elements of the National Curriculum Science Order;
- All maintained secondary schools must provide RSE as part of the basic curriculum including, as a minimum, education about HIV, AIDS and STI's and teach about human growth and reproduction as set out in the national curriculum;
- All other elements of PSHE, including SRE are non-statutory;
- Section 101(1) of the Education Act 2002 does not require primary schools to provide sex education as part of the 'basic curriculum'. Primary schools can provide sex education but whether they do so is at the discretion of the school;
- All maintained primary and secondary schools are obliged to have an up-to-date, fit for purpose RSE policy that describes the content and organisation of RSE taught outside the National Curriculum Science Order. This is the responsibility of the governing body. They must make copies of the statement available for inspection (at all reasonable times) by parents of registered pupils at the school and provide a copy of the statement free of charge to any parent who asks for one;
- The policy statement must also include a statement about parents' rights under section 405 of the Education Act 1996 to exempt/withdraw their child from sex education.

The Learning and Skills Act 2000 requires that:

- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided but not from teaching the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under the National Curriculum Science Order;
- Young people learn about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children;
- Young people are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate, having regard to the age and cultural background of the pupils concerned;
- When providing SRE all schools must have regard to the Sex and Relationship Education Guidance published in 2000.

Government Guidance on Personal Social Health Education (PSHE)

The elements of SRE that are not included in the National Curriculum Science Order are delivered through PSHE and other areas of the curriculum. In 2008 PSHE was extended to include economic education when a new secondary curriculum was introduced¹³. Both PSHE

and citizenship are non-statutory at Key Stages 1 and 2. At Key Stages 3 and 4 citizenship becomes statutory, although PSHE remains non-statutory. Both are supported by the National Healthy Schools Programme¹⁴. PSHE programmes of study and end of key stage statements to help teachers assess progress were published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA).¹⁵

Government Guidance on SRE

In July 2000, the Department for Education and Employment (now the DfE) published guidance on the delivery of SRE through PSHE in the document Sex and Relationship Education Guidance.¹⁶ Elements of the guidance are supported by the Education and Skills Act 2000. The guidance aimed to support schools to plan SRE policy and practice. It states that all schools must have an up to date policy which:

- Defines SRE
- Describes how SRE is provided and who is responsible for providing it
- States how SRE is monitored and evaluated
- Includes information about parents right to withdrawal
- Is revised regularly
- Is available for inspection and to parents

It also recommends that SRE is planned and delivered as part of PSHE and Citizenship. Schools are expected to have an overall policy on PSHE and Citizenship which includes SRE. Governing bodies are expected to involve parents, children and young people, and health and other professionals to ensure that SRE addresses the needs of the community education and health providers, and the needs of children and young people.

Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013

Pupils must be aware that the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 extends civil marriage to same sex couples in England and Wales. Nothing in the act affects Catholic schools' rights to teach on marriage or on same sex relationships in accord with the norms of the Catholic Church, provided it is done in an appropriate and sensitive way.

Academies and Free Schools

Academies and Free Schools do not have to follow the National Curriculum and so are not under the same statutory obligations as maintained schools. As such, academies are not obliged to teach sex and relationships education, although if they do, they must have regard to the SRE guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Catholic academies must follow the policy, directives and guidance provided by the Diocese.

APPENDIX II

CONTENT KEY STAGE 3 as covered by RE & PSHEe

Year 7

Sanctity of human life
Respect for self and others
Baptism and other rites of initiation
Community relationships
Friendship
Vocation
Marriage
Values
Friendships, with same and opposite sex, and other relationships
Personal hygiene
Body image
Female Genital Mutilation

Year 8

Self-esteem
Friendships
Healthy living, including HIV/AIDS, smoking, diet
Vocation and marriage

Year 9

Self and Christian responsibilities, including respect for sexuality,
management of relationships, emotions, decision making.
Marriage and family life
Self esteem, assertiveness and decision making
Contraception
Parenthood
CSE

Year 10/11

Relationships
Sexually transmitted infections
Abortion
Sexual lifestyles
Loving and caring for others
Tolerance and understanding
Marriage and commitment
Family lifestyles
Separation, divorce
Prejudice
Family planning
Religious attitudes to homosexuality
IVF fertility issues

Image
Looking after yourself
Healthy lifestyles
Staying healthy
Parenting
Controlling relationships
Assertiveness
Domestic violence

RESOURCES

Video clips eg. Baby Borrowers
Role play
Card activities
Debates
Continuums
Worksheets/laminated activity cards from various sources
Challenge Team UK
Ten Ten Theatre Company
Year 10 retreat, theme relationships
Visiting speakers
School nurse
Penny Beale – Domestic Violence

APPENDIX III

CATHOLIC TEACHING ON SEX AND MARRIAGE

Introduction - our dignity as human beings

The teaching of the Catholic Church on Sex and Marriage is firmly rooted in the Scriptures and in the teachings of Christ.

From the very outset The Church proclaims the dignity of men and women, made in the image of their Creator - with the ability to think, to feel and to love.

"God created man in the image of himself. In the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them."

Our sexuality is a wonderful gift from God. But like all God's gifts it needs to be treated with the respect and rational care that befits our dignity as the peak of God's creation. This is not easy, because our sexuality affects our whole approach to life - the way we think and feel and relate to others, and especially our need to give physical expression to our love.

It is also a very powerful instinct. It is a wonderful friend, but it can become a terrible enemy if we do not exercise that restraint, self discipline and common sense which befits our human dignity.

Baptism

This dignity which we all have as human beings, irrespective of race, colour, or creed (and which also lies behind the Church's stance on issues such as euthanasia and abortion), is further transformed by the Sacrament of Baptism. Baptism brings us into a living and

intimate relationship with the very life and love of God Himself. The Sacraments bring God's love into our daily lives. We are drawn closer to the life of the blessed Trinity in proportion to the generosity and faithfulness of our response to the Holy Spirit within us. In the Sacrament of Baptism we enter the community of Christians - ideally a community of love. We become followers of Christ. We are called to love each other as Christ loved us. Jesus' love for us is total, forgiving and self-sacrificing.

Made for Love

We can say that we are made by Love for love. We are created to seek love. Our endless search for love, fulfilment, understanding and happiness is ultimately, a search for that perfect love which can only be found in God.

In our life's journey to God, we give expression to our love and to our need for love, primarily within the very sacred relationship of marriage.

The faithful, selfless love between a married couple draws them daily closer to the infinite love of God as well as drawing them ever closer to each other. Love making and sexual intercourse between husband and wife unites them in an intimacy and tenderness which heals, reassures, satisfies and affirms them as precious to each other. Concern for each other's pleasure and sexual satisfaction is part of their love. If it results in the creation of new life they will see this as the visible expression of their mutual love, and of God's love for them.

Sex outside Marriage

The teaching of Jesus is clear and uncompromising - and was considered to be such even by the apostles. At the same time our Lord was always full of compassion and understanding. He would condemn the sin but not the sinner.

We can not judge anyone, and only Almighty God knows our inmost soul.

Many people would say that when a couple fall in love and get married they are only "doing what comes naturally". Catholics would agree with this; but they would add that such a couple are also doing "what comes SUPERnaturally". The Catholic Church teaches that this high ideal of selfless love can best be achieved through the permanent and exclusive relationship of marriage. Christians believe that Jesus came to show us how to be fully human and fully alive.

"I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."

The Catholic Church's view on Marriage

The Catholic Church presents us with an ideal of marriage which is modelled on the total, self-sacrificing, forgiving, and life-long love which we see in the life and death of Christ Himself. It is based on a fundamental respect for our dignity as human beings - created and redeemed by God, and destined for happiness and love - both here and hereafter.

As followers of Christ, sharing his life and love through our Baptism and the other Sacraments, we give expression and witness to our faith and love by our attitude towards our sexuality, and especially towards marriage.

The following principles represent the Catholic view of an ideal sacramental marriage (i.e. a marriage between two baptised people). Much of what follows is implicit in the two essential qualities of Unity and Indissolubility.

Much of what follows is also taught by members of other faiths:

The Catholic Church sees Marriage as a permanent and exclusive relationship arising from a contract, freely entered into by the bride and groom, together with openness to the possibility of children.

Permanent - a lifelong and indissoluble partnership

- This excludes divorce and remarriage.
(A couple may obtain a *civil* divorce for practical reasons. In this case Catholics are not free to re-marry in church.)
- This gives the marriage both stability and strength.
- The couple vow to persevere through good and bad times.
- Their faith, and love of God and of each other grow daily.
- It builds up trust and a secure home for the children.

Exclusive - between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

- This rules out infidelity of any kind.
- Jesus specifically condemned adultery;

"I say this to you; If a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

- Fidelity and honesty is a tremendous source of strength,

Unconditional - in practice this usually means openness to having children.

- Couples should plan their families responsibly.
- To exclude even the possibility of children (e.g. for career reasons) would usually invalidate a marriage.
- Marriages of older couples are welcomed by the Church.

Freely entered - both parties must decide without any undue pressure.

- If either partner has been married before they may not be free to marry in the Catholic Church.
- The couple must appreciate what they are doing, and intend to honour their vows.
- Any deficiency in these factors could render the marriage invalid in the sight of the Church. (cf. later note on Nullity).

Contract/Covenant Relationship - The contract is made by the couple before God.

- The terms of the marriage contract are not negotiable.
- They have been given to us by Christ Himself:

"What God has joined together, let no man put asunder."

- Marriage is a partnership between equals.
- The seriousness and sacredness of the marriage contract between two Christians renders it different from a merely civil contract.

A Catholic couple know that Almighty God is very much present in their marriage. It is called the Sacrament of Marriage. Indeed St. Paul likens the union of married love as a symbol of the close union between Almighty God and his chosen people...between Christ and his

Church. For this reason the marriage vows which a Christian couple exchange are called a *Covenant* relationship. They freely enter into a binding commitment for life in which their love of God is a very important and effective part. It involves three - husband, wife and Almighty God. That is why it is called a Sacrament.

Family Planning and Contraception

The Church encourages couples to plan their families responsibly so that they can provide adequately for their children. The Church teaches that each act of love should be open to the creation of new life.

This immediately raises the question of how a couple are to manage their own fertility. The Church's approach is to say that a couple, in their love making, should respect and preserve both the unitive and procreative aspects of sexual relations. In effect, this implies that only the natural family planning methods are available for Catholics.

These are based on nature's own rhythmic cycle of a woman's fertility. To use this method can be a source of great strength for a couple. It requires a total commitment of both partners, and considerable self-restraint.

Other, artificial, means of contraception are currently available. These include the pill, the cap and the sheath.

A Catholic, who deliberately and knowingly used a contraceptive method which is *primarily* abortifacient, would be in danger of committing a very serious offence against God's law. This demands that we respect life - especially when it is most vulnerable - within the womb.

While encouraging all married couples to respect her teaching, the Catholic Church also accepts that they must always follow the dictates of their own conscience, especially if they come from different religious backgrounds. The stability, happiness and security of the marriage must be an overriding factor in any decision they make in the matter of family planning.

Catholics who use artificial birth control methods are not rejected by the Church. They are still precious members of the community.

Nullity

As we have already noted, a Catholic marriage may prove to be invalid for a variety of reasons. The usual reason is when one of the parties to the contract is clearly unprepared to honour its terms, e.g. with regard to fidelity. This has to be proved. If a Nullity is granted, it is simply a statement that the marriage was null and void from the outset, irrespective of the sincerity of the innocent party. It is not "divorce by the back door".

Respect for Life

Abortion. The Catholic Church has always, and will always condemn abortion as the deliberate and unlawful taking of human life. No amount of insistence on the woman's right to choose, or the defence of abortion on social or medical grounds can hide the fact that "termination of pregnancy" is a denial of the unborn child's right to life.

Some operations which are abortive are allowed by the Church, but as a secondary effect arising from medical or surgical treatment of the pregnant mother - for example the ectopic foetus and some treatments for cancer.

Euthanasia. The so called "mercy-killing" of terminally ill patients, on the grounds that they no longer have any "quality of life" is also rejected by the Catholic Church. First of all, it presumes to "play God" in deciding whether or when a person should die. Life is given and taken by God. It is sacred and must be protected and sustained by all reasonable means.

As with Abortion, so with Euthanasia, there can be situations when a life is shortened as a result of medical treatment given for the alleviation of intense pain. However, such shortening of life is not directly intended and merely enables the terminally ill patient to prepare for their natural death with peace of mind and dignity.

Scientific work on the Embryo and Foetus

While the Catholic Church supports scientific work for the alleviation of suffering and disease, it does not permit this when human life forms are destroyed.

Such an approach may seem obstructive and obscurantist, but the fundamental attitude of the Church remains consistent throughout its teaching on matters regarding human life. Human Life is sacred; the means whereby it comes into existence is sacred.



APPENDIX IV

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Workplace	St Richard's Catholic College	Department	Safeguarding
Risk Assessor	DB		
Room/Area	Whole School		
Activity/Task	Safeguarding : FGM	Date	27 th April 2017
Benefit of activity	Keep pupils safe.		

<p>Description of Hazards FGM can lead to infection, emotional anxiety and mental health issues and death.</p>	
<p>Consequence of Hazard</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Minor injury Injury Over three-day absence Major injury Disability or Death </p>	
<p>Persons at Risk Pupils highest at risk are from families who originate from countries in Africa, Middle East, Asia. Whilst FGM is not a religious practise and this is a Catholic School, it is a cultural practise and as a school with a large number of EAL pupils we must be ever vigilant to its possibility.</p>	
<p>Current Control Measures</p> <p>Designated schemes of work in PSHE to raise awareness and signpost support. All staff trained on FGM (County training July 2016). JBL safeguarding officer has received specific training on FGM. Attendance officer aware and tracks holiday requests (though we are mindful that this is also happening in this country so absence of pupils is also scrutinised – no pupils from high risk countries are currently in the school but we are mindful that you cannot be certain of every child's ethnic origins). Staff are fully aware that they can always come and discuss FGM concerns, information or issues with the DSL.</p>	
<p>Please mark appropriate number (1 = very low, 5 = very high) and Risk Priority Rating</p>	
<p>Likelihood : 1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Severity : 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>Risk (Likelihood x Severity)</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Risk Priority Rating</p>	<p>High (16 – 25) Medium (9 – 15) Low (1 – 8)</p>
<p>Recommended Control Measures If pupil joins school with a suspected risk whole staff training to take place at earliest opportunity.</p>	
<p>Revised Risk Priority Rating (L) x (S) =</p>	<p>High (16 – 25) Medium (9 – 15) Low (1 – 8)</p>

Management action taken and implementation date(s)		
Name of Manager: Deborah Bligh	Signature of Manager:	Date: 27 th April 2017.

1st review undertaken on: September 2017	Signature of Manager:	Date:
2nd review undertaken on:	Signature of Manager:	Date:
3rd review undertaken on:	Signature of Manager:	Date: