

OUR LADY IMMACULATE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Introduction:

At Our Lady Immaculate we believe that Relationship and Sex Education needs to be a highly personalised area of the curriculum. We encourage parents and carers to discuss education for personal relationships with their child when they feel it is appropriate.

Through the teachings of our Catholic faith we believe that each person is special and unique in the eyes of God and it should be so in our eyes also. Every member of staff in Our Lady Immaculate is committed therefore to developing and fostering a positive self-image in every child from the day they enter. We value the rich diversity of ethnic backgrounds, cultures and experiences which our children and their families bring to our school and will endeavour to reflect these wherever possible.

Church teaching:

On all questions relating to faith and morals, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is normative. The following is a brief summary from the *Catechism*:

“God created man and woman in his own image, with equal dignity, different yet complementary. Our sexuality is a gift from God, and must be expressed according to his will of love. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and we are one body with Christ. Chastity should be presented in a positive way: it is a gift from God, leading to a self-control which frees us to behave towards ourselves and others with love and with justice. God’s holy gift of sexual intercourse is reserved for the permanent commitment of marriage, expressive of the bond of mutual love and open to God’s gift of new life.” (para 2331-2400, 2514-2533.) “Genuine love is the fundamental vocation of every human being.” (para 2392.)

The document from the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educational Guidance in Human Love* states:

“Sexuality is a fundamental component of personality, one of its modes of being, of manifestation, of communicating with others, of feeling, of expressing and of living human love. Therefore it is an integral part of the development of the personality and of the educative process.” “Sex education is not reducible to simple teaching material, nor theoretical knowledge alone, nor does it consist of a programme to be carried out progressively, but it has a specific object in view: an effective maturation of pupils’ self-control and of correct behaviour in special relationships.” (SCCE, 1983.)

This document identifies the primary duty of parents to educate their children in matters of human love and the auxiliary but essential duty of the school to co-operate and provide what is best done in the school context.

Further clarification of the subsidiarity of schools to the primary rights and duties of parents is outlined in the document produced by the Pontifical Council for the Family (1995), *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*. This document is highly recommended to parents since it is they who are the prime educators of their children. The document emphasises Gospel values and draws on the insights of science taking into account contemporary social and cultural conditions of family life. It indicates how negative and selfish values concerning human sexuality can be effectively overcome when parents and schools co-operate to foster a genuine appreciation of the values of chastity, self-control and authentic human love which always puts the needs of others before self.

Approved by Governing body: Autumn 2020
Date of next review: Autumn 2022

The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales publication, *Cherishing Life*, gives a Catholic perspective on fundamental issues relating to the moral and spiritual well-being of the human person in society, especially with reference to the value and protection of human life. It contains a section on the Church's teaching on sexuality.

Statutory Requirements for the school curriculum

Statutory requirements for Sex and Relationship Education are set out in the 1986 and 1993 Education Acts, with further references in the Education Act 1996. The most recent guidance on this is the DfEE Guidance 0116/2000, *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance*, which replaces Circular 5/94 and takes account of the revised National Curriculum, the new Personal, Social and Health Education framework and the Social Exclusion Unit report on teenage pregnancy.

'Journey in Love' is the recommended programme of study for Catholic schools for Sex and Relationship Education, and has been written as a progressive scheme of work that supports the Religious Education, PSHE and Science curricula taught within the school.

As children progress through school, they discover more and more about themselves and the wider world. This thirst for learning new things in all aspects of life is fostered by the school, who attempt to create a safe, stimulating environment for learning; supporting all children in their development. Our mission statement which drives the school, attempts to achieve this goal following the Gospel values of truth and respect, understanding our journey as children of God, both special and unique.

Our aims:

We deliver the taught curriculum mainly through RE, PSHE and Science, but other opportunities to reinforce learning will occur in other parts of the teaching programme. The school actively co-operates with other agencies. Visitors who support the school will be informed of the values held within this policy

At Our Lady Immaculate we develop confidence to talk, listen and think about feelings and relationships:

- Make and maintain friendships
- Understand the importance of respect, responsibility, love and care in relationships
- Understand and respect different types of families, including families with same sex parents
- Develop positive attitudes about growing up
- Explore their own and other people's attitudes and values
- Challenge gender stereotypes, discrimination, homophobic, and transphobic language and promote equality and respect in relationships
- The physical development of their bodies as they grow into adults
- Respect for their own bodies
- The importance of family life
- Moral questions
- Relationship issues.

The Sex and Relationships Education programme reflects the school ethos and encourages the following values:

- A respect for self
- A respect for others
- Commitment, trust within relationships
- Honesty with self and others
- A development of critical self-awareness for themselves and for others

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- An exploration of the rights, duties, and responsibilities involved in relationships
- Compassion, forgiveness, mercy, and care
- An acknowledgement and understanding of diversity.

Content:

Sex and Relationships Education will be co-ordinated by the Senior Leadership Team.

Delivery will be through:

- Topics
- Planned aspects of science
- Being addressed occasionally in assembly time
- Planned visits from the wider school community
- Pastoral time
- Story time
- Circle time
- Learning Mentor support
- Science
- PSHE

A variety of learning methods which involve pupils' full participation will be used. Please see appendices for further details.

Confidentiality:

As a general rule a child's confidentiality will be maintained by the teacher or member of staff concerned. If this person believes that a child is at risk or in danger, she /he is to talk to the designated teacher for child protection who will confer with the Headteacher before any decision is made. The child concerned will be informed that confidentiality is being breached and the reasons why.

Disclosure or suspicion of possible abuse:

Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School has a Child Protection Policy and procedure for dealing with child sexual abuse based on the LA guidelines and recommendations. This policy is available on request.

Answering difficult questions:

Sometimes an individual child will ask an explicit or difficult question in the classroom. Teachers have been informed that they do not have to answer questions of this nature directly; they can be addressed individually later.

Outside Agencies:

Outside agencies will be used to support and assist the teachers in the development of the classroom-based work. On rare occasions outside agencies may be involved in classroom-based work as part of the developmental programme, following discussions and negotiation. They will be required to work within the school's moral framework outlined earlier.

Dissemination of the policy:

All staff members receive a copy of this policy. Several copies are available for loan from the school admin office on request. A short summary of this policy will be included in the school prospectus.

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Evaluation and review:

Evaluations of plans will be done after each topic and amended where needed. The policy will be reviewed every three years using a consultative process which identifies teacher, pupil and parent feedback on the sex and relationships education programme.