



# SEX & RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

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1.0	Sept 2008	
2.0	Sept 2017	School name changed to Mount St Joseph (Removal of Business & Enterprise College) Revision of supplementary guidance from DfEE (0116/2000)
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We believe that every child is uniquely created and loved by God and called by Him to fulfil a special purpose. It is our privilege to help each child to identify, nurture and use his/her talents to build a better world. To this end we will work in partnership with parents, parishes, the community of schools and with the wider community.

## Introduction and Rationale

Mount St Joseph is a Catholic school which bases all its teaching on the Christian belief that each pupil is unique. Education in sexual matters is primarily the responsibility of the parents. The role of the school is a complementary one. Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) is a major aspect of PSHE within the National Curriculum and therefore pupils have an entitlement to experience SRE throughout their statutory education. SRE is also a component of the school's comprehensive programme of Personal, Social and Health Education.

In all areas of human experience a good base of knowledge and understanding is deemed necessary for informed opinions and decisions to be made – human sexuality is no exception. It is vital that pupils receive effective sex and relationship education before they become sexually active or put themselves at risk in other ways. It is also vital to correct prejudice and misinformation which may affect relationships with others both now and in the future.

The objective of sex and relationship education is to help and support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development. A successful programme, firmly embedded in PSHE, will help young people learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood. At Mount St Joseph we believe that learning information about the physical aspects of sex, must be complemented by learning about family life and the exercise of personal responsibility towards other individuals and the broader community.

In drawing up the school's policy due regard has been given to:

- consultation with parents/carers, governors, teachers and other stakeholders;
- the issues of content, organisation, methodology, resources, outside speakers, the explicitness and presentation of their material (including the presence or intervention of teachers as appropriate);
- encouraging pupils to have regard to the sanctity of life, moral considerations and to appreciate the value of a stable family life, self-restraint, dignity, respect and to behave responsibly in sexual matters.

Copies of this policy are available upon request to all concerned parties including parents/carers.

## Statutory requirements

As a maintained secondary school we must provide RSE to all pupils as per the [Children and Social work act 2017](#).

In teaching RSE, we must have regard to to [guidance](#) issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the [Education Act 1996](#).

This policy and the curriculum have been updated to comply with statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE).

All schools must provide RSE to all students from September 2020

As a Catholic school we will fulfil the statutory requirements of the Model Catholic RSE Curriculum put forward by the Catholic Education Service

### **Definition**

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

### **Specific Aims**

The following aims reflect those of the school and the general aims of the cross curricular themes, and show how Sex and Relationship Education is delivered within the context of a Catholic school and its ethos.

1. To provide a broad and balanced Sex and Relationship Education Programme which:
  - offers full entitlement and access for all including pupils with Special Educational Needs/Disabilities;
  - operates in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect encouraging pupils to discuss ideas and issues in a sensitive and mature matter.
  
2. By exploring moral and sexual issues and values to:
  - endow the pupil with positive proactive attitudes, patterns of behaviour, lifestyles, values, communication and decision making skills and respect to sexuality and personal relationships e.g.:
    - those appropriate to informed decision making and evaluation of the socio-economic/cultural influences of sexual behaviour;
    - non-exploitation, commitment and trust in sexual relationships;
    - an understanding that both sexes have responsibilities in sexual matters;
    - the skills to identify, avoid, resist and report unwanted sexual experience.
  
  - To foster self-esteem, self-awareness and a sense of moral responsibility.
  
3. To give pupils knowledge and understanding of the following in order for them to make informed choices:
  - the physical, emotional and social aspects of an individual's development as a male or female, personal relationships; responsible attitudes and appropriate behaviour.
  - family life – the value and importance of the family as a social institution; its contribution to the development of attachment, love and concern in caring for others.
  - The Church and society at large – the emotional, moral, religious and social implications of sexuality.

4. To show that World Health has a global dimension and to understand the responsibility of groups, organisations and society for the health of the individual and the community.
5. To approach Sex and Relationship Education by an active and creative process of enquiry and investigation through projects, discussions, role-play, case studies. Observation and analysis are central to this process.

### **Informing and Involving Parents**

The views, participation and feedback from parents/carers is vital for the most effective and appropriate sex and relationship education. The school organises opportunities for the parents to discuss sex education, HIV and drugs programmes in conjunction with the whole school community.

### **Offering Advice**

The Governors and staff believe that the school's function is to provide an education about sexual and relationship matters and issues within a Christian context and not to offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour and contraception – however sources of professional information and advice will be identified when appropriate. Advice does not legally require consent but the following procedure protects the teacher and the pupil, and acknowledges that teachers may not be qualified to give the required advice

### **Teachers**

Provide pupils with education and information about where and from whom they can receive confidential sexual/relationship advice and/or treatment, e.g. school nurse, their GP or Book Advisory Centre. This is not the provision of sex and relationship education, but merely the imparting of factual information as to where advice, counselling (and treatment) can lawfully be obtained. Appointments to see the nurse can be arranged by the pupil through the Pastoral Care Officers.

### **Explicit Questions**

It is unlikely to be appropriate when dealing with pupil's explicit questions, particularly in group discussions or in front of the whole class. In practice this means that teachers have to say "I'm sorry but the school Policy and legislation does not allow me to answer that question". The teacher may deem it appropriate to discuss the child's concerns with the parents/carers or pastoral staff following consultation with a senior member of staff – a decision may then be taken on how best to deal with it. Answers to the 'questions in a box' approach must only be given after very careful screening of the questions.

### **Confidentiality**

Having considered all available advice and guidance, the Governors and Headteacher state that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at some risk of

any type of abuse (e.g. moral or physical) or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately in writing to the designated teacher for child protection (or in their absence the Headteacher) in compliance with the LA procedures for Child Protection. (See Child Protection Policy). The designated Safeguarding lead will decide whether to inform the parents/carers and/or appropriate authorities and may arrange for counselling or the involvement of external agencies. Although there is no legal duty on a teacher, or a Headteacher, to inform parents/carers of matters which a child has confided to them. This also covers the grounds of a disclosure that refers to child exploitation, child sexual exploitation and trafficking in all its forms:

- teachers must not promise confidentiality;
- pupils must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the designated Safeguarding lead and possibly to parents/carers;

**N.B. Failure of staff to adhere to this statement may constitute grounds for disciplinary action.**

### **The Division between Biological and Non-Biological Aspects of Sex Education**

The division between biological and non-biological aspects of sexual behaviour is indicated by the contribution of the Sex Education Programme made by the Science Department. The themes of parenting, relationships and the ethical and moral considerations of sex and relationship education are embedded within the R.E. and PSHE curriculum. The Science Department deals only with the biological aspects of human sexual behaviour in its timetabled lessons.

### **Withdrawing Pupils from the Sex and Relationship Education Programme**

We believe that the programme of SRE provided by Mount St Joseph is appropriate and suitable for all of our students. The programme takes account of the different stages of our pupils' maturity and emotional development and wellbeing having reference at all times to their needs and levels of understanding.

### **Requests for withdrawal made by a parent/carer**

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. In such circumstances, the headteacher or senior leaders will discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate, with the student, to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

As part of this process, the headteacher or senior leaders will underline the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child, including any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher.

Should a parent's request to withdraw the child be upheld, the student may be excused up to and until three terms before their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. After that point, if the child wishes to receive

sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

This process is the same for students with SEND. However there may be exceptional circumstances where the headteacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision.

Students who are excused will be provided with alternative work.

- we discuss the nature of the concerns with the child's parent/carer and if appropriate attempt to reassure them;
- we consider whether the programme can be amended or improved in a way that will reassure parents/carers – care is taken not to undermine the integrity of the SRE Programme and the entitlement of the other pupils, e.g. it may be appropriate and desirable to have single sex classes for some sections of the SRE Programme.;
- we attempt to ensure that where a pupil is withdrawn there is no disruption to other parts of their education,
- we point out that pupils who have been withdrawn are vulnerable to teasing – we therefore attempt to causing minimal embarrassment to pupils and minimal disruption to the programme;
- we also point out that pupils may receive inaccurate information from their peers;
- we offer the parents/carers access to appropriate information and resources.

**N.B. Parents/carers do not have to give reasons for withdrawal, but we respectfully invite them to do so – sometimes we can then resolve misunderstandings. Once a parent/carers request to withdraw is made, that request must be complied with until revoked by the parent/carer.**

If a pupil does not agree with the parent/carers desire to withdraw them from the SRE Programme, the pupil can challenge the parents/carers under Section 8 of the Children Act – the child has to apply to the court for a 'specific issues order'.

### **Using Visiting Speakers and Others**

We believe that most of the SRE Programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the pupils. The use of visitors e.g. from Relate organisation, can greatly enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of a planned programme of SRE. Care is taken to provide the visitor, well in advance of the visit, with a copy of the SRE Policy. After gaining approval from the Headteacher for the visit the organiser makes the visitor aware of the ethos of the school and the manner of delivery of the SRE Programme. Issues to consider are:

- the degree of explicitness of the content and presentation;
- the appropriateness of specific content in the context of the Catholic Ethos
- will the visitor be accompanied by teaching staff?

- will the staff take an active roll in the visitor's activities?
  - how will the visitor be prepared for the visit?
  - how will the visit be built upon and followed up?
1. Visitors should be given advanced notice of the composition of the audience/target group and an idea of how their contribution fits into the scheme of work.
  2. In order to inform the visitor of the precise requirements of the group it is advisable for the group to draw up questions in advance and these should be forwarded to the visitor. This will involve the pupils in the visit and will make the experience more relevant for them – it also facilitates planning.
  3. Reception/office staff should be informed of the date and the name of the visitor.
  4. The visitor should be welcomed at the main door.
  5. At the office the visitor will 'sign in', prominently display a 'Visitors Badge' and will then be escorted to the appropriate venue.
  6. High standards of behaviour are expected from our pupils at all times, including when visitors are present.
  7. At the end of the session a vote of thanks should be given by a pupil and the visitor escorted to Reception/office before the pupils are dismissed.
  8. After the visit the visitor will 'sign out', return the 'visitors badge' and will then be escorted to the exit.

**NB The health professionals are able to offer young people confidentiality and can provide the link between the school and support services.**

### **Equal Opportunities Issues and Pupils with Special Educational Needs/Disabilities:**

Children with special educational needs/disabilities may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up; they may also need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are not acceptable, and in being warned and prepared against abuse by others. Some parents/carers find it difficult to come to terms with the idea that their child (SEND or not) will someday become sexually active. The nature of work undertaken is appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. The SRE Programme is a 'spiral system' in as much that key concepts are revisited several times throughout the programme allowing for SRE content to be covered as pupils mature throughout their time at Mount St Joseph. This allows for reinforcement as well as the differentiated stages of pupil maturity when referring to sex and relationships awareness.

### **INSET**

All teachers involved in this work do not necessarily have to be 'experts' on the issues concerned. However, they do require sensitivity to the needs of the group, an ability to deal with questions openly/honestly and a readiness to refer to more advice if necessary. Areas that have been specifically addressed are:

- an examination of the school's SRE Policy;
- an examination of the timing of the different elements of the SRE Programme;
- an examination of who should teach the programme;

- consultation about using the skills related to managing group work and discussion.

### **The Catholic Faith and RSE**

A good understanding of students' faith backgrounds and positive relationships between the school and local faith communities help to create a constructive context for the teaching of these subjects.

At Mount St Joseph, the religious background of all students is taken into account when planning teaching, so that the topics that are included in the core content are appropriately handled.

Mount St Joseph School complies with the relevant provisions of the [Equality Act 2010](#), under which religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics.

As a Catholic School, lessons will be delivered through a faith perspective, and we facilitate balanced debate about issues that are seen as contentious.

### **Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing the SRE Programme**

Mount St Joseph Catholic School is committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the SRE programme.

### **Other Benefits**

SRE can also contribute to the school by contributing to the quality of display work, assembly themes, form time activities and other pastoral events that take place throughout whole school life.

## Appendix 1: By the end of secondary school pupils should know

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That there are different types of committed, stable relationships</li> <li>• How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children</li> <li>• What marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony</li> <li>• Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into</li> <li>• The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships</li> <li>• The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting</li> <li>• How to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed</li> </ul>
Respectful relationships, including friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship</li> <li>• Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships</li> <li>• How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)</li> <li>• That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs</li> <li>• About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help</li> <li>• That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control</li> <li>• What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable</li> <li>• The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal</li> </ul>

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Online and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online</li> <li>• About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online</li> <li>• Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them</li> <li>• What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online</li> <li>• The impact of viewing harmful content</li> <li>• That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners</li> <li>• That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail</li> <li>• How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online</li> </ul>
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships</li> <li>• How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)</li> </ul>

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship</li> <li>• That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing</li> <li>• The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women</li> <li>• That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others</li> <li>• That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex</li> <li>• The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available</li> <li>• The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage</li> <li>• That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help)</li> <li>• How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing</li> <li>• About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment</li> <li>• How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour</li> <li>• How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment</li> </ul>