

SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION POLICY

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC COLLEGE



“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.”
(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Reviewer	P Hanrahan	
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INTRODUCTION

The school mission statement clearly outlines the firm belief that students need to be educated academically, physically and spiritually. Each student is entitled to a sound guidance programme in personal, social and moral issues, so that they grow into mature Christian men and women, willing and able to play a full part in society as a whole.

The education of the students at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic College in sexual matters must be firmly rooted in the teaching of the Catholic Church, with particular attention given to guidelines provided by the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The aim is to combine treatment of the biological, moral and religious aspects of sexuality and procreation, and situate the whole in the context of marriage, the family and family relationships.

The Sex and Relationship material is taught co-operatively by the RE and Science departments and Values Education so that a balanced approach is maintained throughout. The material is firmly based on Christian principles and positive Catholic teaching. Principles of the SRE programme is found in Appendix 2.

The school recognises that despite all the changes that have occurred in society, the home still remains the ideal place for the discussion of issues concerning sexuality and family life. Nothing can replace the influence of parents in this field. The role of the school will be that of assisting and completing the work of parents. They will be fully consulted and informed about the school provision in this important area.

Principal Aims

The overall purpose of the Sex Education Programme in school is to promote an integrated appreciation of matters concerning sexuality and family life, setting everything in its full moral, social and religious context, in the light of the Catholic Christian tradition.

The programme seeks to:

1. Foster an understanding of the physical, emotional, moral, religious and social implications of relationships for the individual, the family, the Church and society at large.
2. Foster an understanding of family relationships, the nature of love and the importance of marriage and the family.
3. Give, in particular, a clear presentation of Catholic teaching concerning humanity, sexuality, marriage and the family, and promote understanding of such teaching.
4. Give young people a knowledge of the facts concerning development at puberty, and the reproduction of human beings.
5. To promote ways in which young people can examine contemporary stereotypes of masculine and feminine behaviour and assume responsibility for their actions.
6. To help students develop the confidence and skills to discern messages in the media and the positive and negative effects of peer pressure; enabling them to make decisions about how to act in accordance with their own beliefs and values.
7. Give young people
 - An opportunity to explore their own feelings, attitudes and values

- The skills to help them to appreciate their responsibilities with regard to their developing fertility
- The skills to examine how to control their emotions and instincts
- Assistance to make responsible choices for their way of life on the basis of Christian principles.

Guidelines for teachers are included in Appendix 3

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governors

The Governors of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School take responsibility for the provision of sex education for all students registered at the school, in accordance with statutory and non-statutory guidance given in Appendix 1. There is a requirement that the education of students in sexual matters be firmly rooted in the teaching of the Catholic Church, and guided clearly by the advice issued to schools by the Archdiocesan authorities.

The Governors emphasise the over-riding Catholic principle of the sacredness of sex and life. They urge all those engaged in the enterprise of sex education to treat this matter with the sensitivity required, according to the maturity and emotional capacity of individual students. The programme delivered here in school will assist and complement the work of parents to furnish their children with the values and attitudes they need to help them make responsible choices for their way of life on the basis of Catholic principles.

The Religious Education (RE) Department

The RE Department assumes responsibility for the delivery of the Sex Education Policy throughout the school. The Department, together with the Science department provide help and advice to other departments or individuals as required. The Head of RE will monitor the delivery of the Sex Education Programme, the standard of provision and maintain the Catholic attitude to sexual behaviour within the school under the guidance of the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team.

The Science Department

The Science Department agrees to deliver all education on sexual matters in conjunction with the RE Department. This will facilitate the delivery of the programme and ensure that all staff who are involved in teaching the material are supportive of the principles and overall purpose of a sex education programme which subscribes to the Catholic ethos of the school.

Pastoral Care

The responsibility for pastoral care is shared by all the members of staff who come into daily contact with the students, with the Form Tutor taking a primary role. Although there is no formal instruction in sex education during Values Education time, there will be advice and guidance on matters relating to healthy relationships.

Form Tutors are encouraged to respond positively and discreetly to inquiries from students as and when they occur. If they feel unable to do this then they are encouraged to refer the matter to the HAL (Head of Achievement and Learning) at the earliest opportunity. Teachers are not health professionals and, consequently, not in a position to offer advice on sexual matters. Where a student relates or alludes to an incident that involves physical or sexual abuse, then the member of staff should report that immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a senior member of staff.

Parents

The Governors and teachers acknowledge the primary role that parents have in the sexual and moral education of children. Parents will be informed when the programme is going to begin in school and are welcome to inspect the documentation and material that the school has in relation to the Sex Education Programme.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from sex education, except where it is part of the National Curriculum.

Appendix 1

The law requires that maintained secondary schools teach sex education, human growth and reproduction including education about HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections as set out in the National Curriculum. It also requires that the governing body and head teacher ensure that any sex and relationship education is provided in a way that encourages pupils to consider the value of family life.

Below is a summary of statutory requirements and non-statutory guidance and government priorities that schools must recognise in relation to SRE

Statutory requirements:

SRE at St Francis of Assisi College follows current DfE guidelines for schools (2000). Students need high-quality sex and relationships education so they can make wise and informed choices and the government promises to work with teachers, parents, faith groups and campaign groups to improve SRE.

The revised **National Curriculum** (2000) is underpinned by a stated belief in education, at home and at school, as a route to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development, and thus the well-being of the individual. It has two broad aims that provide an essential context within which schools develop their own curriculum.

Aim 1. The school curriculum should aim to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve.

Aim 2. The school curriculum should aim to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) and prepare all pupils for the opportunities and responsibilities of life.

In summary these aims ensure that the curriculum provides for pupils to be able to understand their rights and responsibilities; develop enduring values and their own integrity and autonomy in respecting their environments and communities. It promotes pupils' self-esteem and emotional well-being and helps them to form and maintain satisfying relationships.

The **SRE Guidance** (2000) is supported in legislation by the **Learning and Skills Act** (2000) which requires that young people:

- Learn about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children;
- Are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate having regard to the age and the religious and cultural background of the pupils concerned.

The 1996 Education Act consolidated all relevant previous legislation. In summary:

- The SRE elements in the National Curriculum Science Order across all Key Stages are mandatory for all pupils of secondary school age;
- All schools must provide an up-to-date policy that describes the content and organisation of SRE provided outside the National Curriculum Science Order. It is the school governors' responsibility to ensure that the policy is developed and made available to parents for inspection.
- Secondary schools are required to provide an SRE programme which includes as a minimum information about sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.

Non-Statutory Guidance:

In 1999 a national framework for Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship was published. This unified framework has four strands, aiming to promote a holistic approach:

1. Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities;
2. Preparing to play an active role as citizens;
3. Developing a healthy, safer lifestyle;
4. Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people.

For Secondary schools, the SRE Guidance states that SRE should prepare young people for an adult life in which they can:

- Develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their judgements, decisions and behaviour;
- Be aware of their sexuality and understand human sexuality;
- Understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity;
- Understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships;
- Have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge the kind of relationships they want;
- Communicate effectively;
- Know how the law applies to sexual relationships
- Avoid being pressurised into unwanted or unprotected sex;
- Avoid being exploited or exploiting others;
- Understand the reasons for having protected sex;

- Have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV;
- Access confidential sexual health advice, support and if necessary treatment.

Appendix 2

THE DELIVERY OF THE SEX EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN THE CURRICULUM

In order to maintain the balanced and integrated approach necessary for the delivery of matters concerning sexuality and family life, those responsible for the RE, Values Education curriculum have timetabled relevant topics. The RE and Science teachers who deliver the material are aware that the subject should be dealt with sensitively and within the teaching of the Catholic Church.

Appendix 3

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS WITH REGARD TO SEX EDUCATION

The Sex Education Programme will be delivered in school by the RE and Science Departments. The school and Governors have a duty to ensure that the programme is delivered within the context of the spiritual and moral values of the Catholic Church. It is important that all members of staff are aware of the basic teaching of the Church so that they do not knowingly contradict or undermine what is being taught across the rest of the curriculum. The following guidelines are by no means exhaustive. Colleagues are encouraged to highlight specific issues that arise during lessons or discussion that require further explanation.

1. The Church teaches that sexual intercourse should only take place as part of a loving relationship of a man and woman in marriage.
2. The act of sexual intercourse between married men and woman should always be open to the possibility of pro-creation. Couples are encouraged to use natural methods of family planning which are acceptable, and place joint responsibility on husband and wife.
3. Abortion is always morally unacceptable as far as the Catholic Church is concerned. The Church is concerned with the very right to life of innocent human beings and considers abortion to be a question of justice as well as sexual morality.
4. Care should be taken to avoid presenting HIV/AIDS patients, and those suffering from other sexually transmitted diseases, as social outcasts. Without condoning or condemning individual behaviour the staff at St. Francis understand that all people deserve and need the care, love and opportunity of reconciliation, which Christ would want us to show.
5. Care should be taken to avoid presenting the Church's teaching on the above issues as arbitrary ecclesiastical 'rules' or peculiar Catholic idiosyncrasies. Staff should strive to impress that sexual morality is based on the true nature of love, the dignity and value of the human person, the welfare of human society and the duty we all have to behave responsibly towards one another.
6. Education in sexuality is only part of education in relationships. Each young person is entitled to experience relationships between staff and pupils which are marked by honesty, trust, warmth and security. Teachers should always try to answer questions honestly or refer them on if the individual requires further explanation.
7. The principle aim of the school's Mission Statement is the Christian formation of the individual. Teachers have a central role to play in the delivery of a 'value led' curriculum through the prioritisation of those Christian values within the classroom.

