



Diocese of Lancaster  
Education Service



# Human Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Issue date: 28/9/16

Revised date 1/9/18

Review date: 1/9/19

## **1. Introduction**

This policy describes the school responsibilities and teaching structure of Human Relationships and Sex Education at Newman Catholic School.

## **2. Vision and Mission.**

At Newman Catholic School we are committed to the high achievement of all our students. We cultivate success and foster the highest aspirations through excellent teaching. We are a learning community which has high expectations and actively seeks to celebrate the good in every individual. Newman School is built on the Christian values of trust, respect and compassion.

We inspire an enthusiasm for life-long learning and are committed to success for all.

### **Vision for Human Relationships and Sex Education.**

At Newman Catholic School we are inspired by Jesus to lead lives that are purposeful and enable us to fulfil our talents. We care for one another and show mutual respect and love through our relationships with one another. Jesus is invited into our hearts. In the Beatitudes, Jesus invites us to lead a full life with him by explaining what makes people blessed or happy. Through this we grow in our understanding of how loving our neighbour enables us to be happy too. Happiness can only be truly achieved when we have a good relationship with ourselves, recognising our God-given dignity, which enables us to enter into relationships with other people in our lives, which help us grow and flourish, and we respect that everyone is a unique and beautiful part of God's creation. We are all children of God, created equal and called to grow in love for him through the person of Jesus Christ and to spread the Good News through the work of the Holy Spirit. We are gifted with the love of God and the ability to love others. 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.

### **3. Procedures**

Staff, parents, the Diocesan Education Service, the school parliament, sixth form council, school chaplain, local clergy and the governing body have been consulted as part of producing this policy. Consultation included INSET sessions for staff to offer their views as part of the policy which was then sent to governors. A copy was then sent to the Diocesan Education Service and was also discussed at School Parliament. Parents had the opportunity to comment on the Policy through the school website. Comments were noted and included in this policy where appropriate.

In consultation with the Governing Body the policy will be implemented in 2016, reviewed every two years by the Headteacher, HRSE co-ordinator, the governing body and school staff. The next review date is September 2018.

The policy will be circulated to all members of the Governing Body and all members of staff. The school prospectus contains 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.

### **4. Rationale**

As a 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 Newman Catholic 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.

## 5. 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)

Furthermore, 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. All aspects of the statutory framework apply to the school and followed accordingly. Please see below.

State Funded Maintained 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 educations 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 DfEE 2000.
National Curriculum	Statutory sex education forms part of the science programmes of study across Key Stages 1-3.
Sex and Relationships Education Policy	DfEE Guidance (2000) states that all schools should have an up to date SRE policy available for inspections and on request for parents or carers.

## **6. 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 Newman Catholic School we live out the Gospel values shared in the Beatitudes, throughout the life of school using staff to model standards and virtues.

Throughout school we work with Cafod, Benenson Society, Sixth Form Council work with Edlumino, an organisation that builds and runs schools with refugees in war zones and assemblies highlight the suffering in the world.

Counselling services are offered to students by support officers and the pastoral team. The opportunity for prayer, reflection and spiritual development is embedded across the school through Mass, Rosary Group and Exposition. Restorative justice is a key focus in school and staff training has been completed on how to be empathetic and show forgiveness. Students are encouraged to seek restorative solutions.

Staff model Gospel values and virtues through leading by example and students are encouraged to do the same. There are opportunities for the discussion of ethical issues across the curriculum and for these to be explored within the context of a safe and supportive learning environment. There is the opportunity for strong relationships to be developed given the size of the school and many individual classes and students to be recognised as unique individuals. Prayer and reflection opportunities are presented in the form of a weekly assembly for all year groups; morning prayer, Castlerigg residential, the Rosary group and class prayers also offer regular opportunities for prayer with students making contributions to whole school and year group Masses.

## **7. 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 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.

At Newman Catholic School -

- 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 of each and every individual.
- 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 behaviour of others.
- We will encourage the whole school to be a loving family recognising God as a merciful and generous father as Jesus taught us 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 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.

## **8. Inclusion**

At Newman Catholic School 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. Students should only be referred to outside agencies currently working with, or closely associated with the school. Governors and senior management should review regularly the use of such agencies and authorities in order to ensure that their policies are not contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church. These agencies should first be authorised by the Headteacher in accordance with the policy of the governors, before they are permitted to give an input in this field. The school offers support to all students who face conflicts within themselves and through discussion, reflection and prayer help them to overcome their issues and follow God's teaching. We only use external agencies who understand and reflect the teaching of the church. We recognize that parents are the first educators of their children and so the staff at Newman Catholic school should encourage students to seek the advice of their parents and carers when requesting counselling on issues relating to personal relationships and sex education. Pupils requiring or requesting additional support will be treated with dignity and respect and offered support through our pastoral system, work with our Chaplain and through seeking appropriate help from other agencies.

## **9. Equality**

The governing body has wide obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to ensure that Newman Catholic School 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.

For further information please see our equality policy.

## **10. 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.

HRSE permeates the curriculum and a wide range of teaching strategies are used. Moreover, clear ground rules for discussions are always first established by classroom staff and are adhered to. Our behaviour for learning policy monitors the impact of students' understanding as does academic progress, especially in RE and science. Every subject teaches PSHE and evidence of this can be found in the HRSE audit. A whole school approach is adopted to ensure every student's needs are catered for and the teachings of the church are followed. Assemblies are also a suitable forum for delivery of HRSE.

## **11. Parents**

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children. The school supports parents in this task. The role of the school is 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 and the policy was placed on the school's website. 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. Parents are informed of this right on the school's website. The school involves and supports parents in learning about HRSE by sharing the programme of study/published resources to be used via the school's website, with letters as appropriate when visitors are coming to school. 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 RE and science. However, at times, areas of particular sensitivity may benefit from additional parental support.

## **12. Teaching HRSE**

The Head of RE is responsible for the leadership, co-ordination and monitoring of this programme. Cath Reynolds is the governor responsible for HRSE, and HRSE is line managed by the Headteacher with issues discussed at SLT level where appropriate. Whilst HRSE has a cross-curricular focus, there is a particular emphasis upon delivery in RE and science lessons, with outside agencies such as Life and Cafod involved in supporting staff delivery.

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. This forms part of the school induction programme.

## **13. 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 is 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.

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.

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 relevant policies, such as safeguarding.