

# OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL



## School POLICY STATEMENT for HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION

### 1. Vision and Mission

*"We want our school to be a safe, secure and exciting place to learn and grow in Christ. A place where children, staff, families and governors work closely together to answer Christ's call."*



Our Catholic School community works with a Christian purpose:

- To promote an enthusiasm for enjoyment of learning
- To provide a broad and well balanced curriculum
- To challenge children to reach their full potential
- To learn about God and his creation
- To answer Christ's call through our love for each other
- To foster in children independence and a sense of responsibility

*" For you are precious in my eyes"*

*(Isaiah 43)*

### Vision for Human Relationships & Sex Education

*At Our Lady of Lourdes we are inspired by Jesus to be the very best we can be. We look after one another and show respect and love through our relationships with one another. Jesus is invited into our hearts and we see his love in others.*

*In the Beatitudes, Jesus invites us to lead a full life with him by explaining what makes people blessed or happy. This is about understanding how loving our neighbour enables us to be happy too. Therefore, having a good relationship with ourselves and the other people in our lives makes 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, called to grow in love for him through the person of Jesus Christ and to spread the Good News through the action of the Holy Spirit.*

## 2. Procedures

The following groups have been consulted as part of producing this policy.

- staff
- governing body
- parents
- Diocesan Education Service
- wider community (School nurse, volunteers, website)
- school council
- students

In consultation with the Governing Body, the policy will be implemented in 2017 and reviewed every two years, by the Head teacher, HRSE Co-ordinator, the Governing Body and school Staff. The next review date is October, 2021. 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.

## 3. Rationale

As a primary 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. For example,

*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 mathematics or English.*

*At Our Lady of Lourdes we teach young people about how to form relationships, including understanding loving relationships and acknowledging that children's first experience of love is in the home. We encourage children from the earliest age to recognise that they are all children of God and that each person shares a God given dignity. As children 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). 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 in 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019) states that,

"to embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their well-being, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects can support young people to develop resilience, to knowhow and when to ask for for help and to know where to access support"p.8

The Diocese recognises the value of these curriculum aims. However, Catholic schools also have regard for the spiritual welfare of the students and recognise that to know and love God brings lasting happiness.

#### 4. Statutory framework.

The statutory framework replaces Statutory Guidance: 'Sex and Relationships Education Guidance' (2000).

The DfE states that it intends to update the guidance every three years.

The statutory guidance is available from the DfE (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>).

It should be read in conjunction with this Diocesan guidance and the following documents.

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (statutory guidance)

[Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool](#) (a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)

[Behaviour and Discipline in Schools](#) (advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils)

[Equality Act 2010 and schools](#)

[SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#) (statutory guidance)

[Alternative Provision](#) (statutory guidance)

[Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#) (advice for schools)

[Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) (advice for schools, including advice on [cyberbullying](#))

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools](#) (advice for schools)

[The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance](#) (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)

[Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools](#) (guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC)

[SMSC requirements for independent schools](#) (guidance for independent schools on how they should support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development).

[National Citizen Service](#) guidance for schools

## 5. Purpose of the Statutory Guidance

The guidance intends to help children and young people develop. The knowledge and attributes they gain will support their own, and others', wellbeing and attainment and help young people to become successful and happy adults who make a meaningful contribution to society. The Diocese of Lancaster agrees with these aims and seeks to support them through the appropriate development of the HRSE provision.

The table summarises statutory obligations.

Relationships Education	Relationships and Sex Education	Health Education
All schools providing primary education, including all-through schools and middle schools (includes schools as set out in the Summary section).	All schools providing secondary education, including all-through schools and middle schools (see Summary section of statutory guidance).	All maintained schools including schools with a sixth form, academies, free schools, non- maintained special schools and alternative provision, including pupil referral units.

## 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) 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 Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School we live out the Gospel values shared in the Beatitudes, throughout the life of school ...

*Staff model the Gospel values and virtues, and children are encouraged to do the same. They are encouraged to live as Jesus did, putting others before their own needs. Gospel stories are shared to give examples of our daily practice and help inspire pupils to live out their beliefs. Pupils demonstrating acts of good values (linked to the values that we have every half term) are rewarded in celebration assembly with VIP certificates.*

*Children are encouraged to say thank you to God, to be happy and cheerful, to care about other people and know how Jesus cared for others and think about their behaviour.*

*School values kindness to others through praise and awards of credits.*

*Children are encouraged to evaluate their behaviour and give reasons for choices they have made. Children are taught that our choices bring consequences for ourselves and others. They are also taught about the importance of forgiveness when a wrong choice has been made.*

*As pupils progress through Key Stage 2 they will develop a deeper understanding of what is moral behaviour and be able to say why this is important for personal happiness and for a closer relationship with God. Children are given opportunities to learn how prayer enables them to make space for God in their lives and offers opportunities for reflection and growth.*

*Children are taught about the importance of prayer together as a school, as a class and private individual prayer.*

*By the end of Year 6 children should be able to explain some behaviour choices by reference to their beliefs and values, for example, by referring to Jesus teaching about forgiveness.*

## **7. The Aim and Objectives of HRSE.**

The aim of HRSE is 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 or college 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
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- *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 seek to develop attitudes of responsibility towards ourselves and others, recognising the dignity in all.*
  - *We will seek to enable children to understand the choices they make and how they can help or harm themselves and others.*
  - *We will encourage children to learn about expressing their own emotions and being respectful of the emotions and behaviours of others.*
  - *We will encourage the whole school to be like a loving family recognising God as a merciful and generous father as Jesus taught 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 children's knowledge of when to say 'no' to behaviours or attitudes that harm their dignity or the dignity of others and to be responsible for their own safety.*
- *We will develop children's experience of what it is to be happy so that they begin to understand the difference between happiness and gratification and value patience.*
- *We will teach children about the media and their choices, about what to watch, what games to play, what rules apply and that the dignity of all does not just apply to people who are physically seen, it applies to online relationships too.*
- *We will support children 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 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 encourage children to understand difference and be mindful of people who are vulnerable to discrimination because of their personal or cultural characteristics.*

## 8. Inclusion

At Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary 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 are encouraged to respect difference and develop an approach of dialogue.

All staff work closely with pupils and families with additional needs, including transgender pupils, family bereavements, family break-ups, police involvement etc.

## 9. Equality

The governing body has wide obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to ensure that Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary 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.

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School ensures equality through teaching about acceptance and tolerance of difference through our RE curriculum, PSHE, prayer and liturgy. Respect for each other is at the heart of everything that is done. Our school mission statement, behaviour policy, equality policy and our Christian faith underpin all practice in school.

The 2010 Act identifies the following protected characteristics applicable to pupils, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). Age is also a protected characteristic. It does not apply to students, but governors should be aware of this aspect as employers.

Catholic schools should be mindful that our primary mission is to the poor and seek to alleviate any disadvantage. Attention should also focus on the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects to ensure the inclusion of all students in a way that is appropriate for them. **Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education, must be accessible for all pupils and must be borne in**



**mind when planning for pupils with special educational needs** and disabilities who represent a significant minority of pupils.

*Governors, through discussion with the Head and reviewing of monitoring, ensure teaching is differentiated, personalised and accessible. The SEND co-ordinator feedbacks at curriculum meetings as to how SEND pupils are progressing through termly assessments and use of PIVATS. Through strong links with parents, SEND pupils are prepared for High School and for adulthood. Conversations with parents and outside agencies ensure that these children are catered for appropriately and are supported to deal with: aggressive behaviours; exploitation and bullying; acute moments of vulnerability due to family circumstances, such as bereavement and social anxieties, perhaps following relocation or specific physical or mental health problems. This allows us to provide support in school or through links with outside agencies. In some cases, students may require a personal plan for their education in this area to match their needs and stage of development, reflecting statutory requirements and this will be monitored by the Head and fed back to Governors at the appropriate meetings or through the Headteacher's report.*

*Governors consider incidents of bullying, based on the protected characteristics of the Equalities Act, in the Headteacher's report when monitoring students' academic outcomes - with an active awareness of differences based on sex, ethnic or cultural grouping, financial challenges (for example pupil premium) and the progress made by SEND students. If evidence suggest action is needed to tackle such incidents whole school strategies, such as assemblies, workshops or circle times will be implemented to challenge stereotypes.*

The critical characteristic of Catholic education is that all people are children of God. With this belief, underpinning school life, perceived limits on students because of their characteristics must always be subject to challenge as the school is part of the Universal Catholic Church. It is through this lens, schools should challenge stereotypes and address behaviours such as homophobia, misogyny and sexism. Schools must be alive to the fact that the approach of the Church may not be the same as the approach taken in other areas of life, such as social media. A clear and consistent message about human dignity must be conveyed through the whole of school life by staff, students and those who support the work of the school such as governors.

*Governors understand that, at Our Lady of Lourdes, children are encouraged, from the earliest age, to recognise that they are all children of God and that they each share a God given dignity. As the children mature, they are encouraged 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). This is the basis for all relationships in our school. This is reinforced through curriculum intent and the school's inclusion and behavior policy. This policy recognises that some students in school may, when appropriate, need to receive additional support where potential risk is identifiable with particular reference to the protected characteristics.*

Governors at Our Lady of Lourdes understand the implications of the DfE's 2017 guidance 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges' for their school. The guidance covers what sexual violence and harassment is, schools' and colleges' legal responsibilities, a whole school or college approach to safeguarding and child protection and how to respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Sadly, students can believe that sexual violence and harassment are just part of growing up.

In Key Stage 1, children learn about the nature of personal privacy and how to respect their own bodies. They learn about 'private parts' through using the NSPCC video 'Pantosaurus' and through discussion about their bodies in science activities.

In Key Stage 2, children are also given opportunities to learn about personal privacy through visits from the NSPCC, Life Education Van and other SCARF themes relating to sexual violence and harassment.

Governors recognise that, as employers, some of these issues can be challenging for staff.

All teaching in HRSE, including that which covers areas around the protected characteristics, must be sensitive to the age, cultural background and family experiences of students. The Catholic view of human dignity should challenge the cultural assumptions that can underpin prejudices, such as racism, sexism and religious discrimination. Catholic schools should robustly challenge homophobia or any inequitable behaviours based on a person's sexual orientation or gender as an infringement of human dignity. Though schools will teach the Church's view on what it means to be human, and the challenges this offers to a wide range of lifestyles, the needs of the individual students will remain paramount. In a Catholic school, we aim to see the child, a Child of God, as a person in need of love and care. The DfE's guidance makes specific mention of teaching about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender characteristics, which it shortens to LGBT. The guidance states,

"At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT, they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson. Schools are free to determine how they do this, and we expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at an appropriate point as part of this area of the curriculum."

At Our Lady of Lourdes we address questions about sexuality and gender as and when they arise. Our school's behaviour policy identifies all protected characteristics as possible triggers for aggressive or bullying behaviours. We train all staff to support children who are asking questions about themselves or others, in these areas, in partnership with their families and they know the legal requirements incumbent on the school with specific reference to sex or gender requirements. The dignity of each child is central to our care and we support any questioning child and their families through a culture of listening and seeing them as a person. We do not rush to label but offer children and their families time to discuss and explore what is best for them as individuals within our school community.

## 10. Programme of study

A revised programme of study has been prepared to support educators in our family of schools as they enable our young people to grow in faith and understanding of themselves, their relationship with God and with one another. The Department for Education has prepared a statutory programme for 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' which will be a compulsory requirement from September 2020. The Diocese of Lancaster began working on Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) in 2016.

The intent of the programme of study is to encourage young people to recognise their interior beauty, their dignity as a human and through this to understand and value the worth of others. We hope that this builds on the experience of the home where, as children, we all experience our first expressions of love and form our early relationships. The challenge in school life is to develop this not just in an academic sense, but as a lived expression of belief ultimately, an invitation to hear the Good

*"We must wonder! We must create an environment of wonder! We must create a climate of wonder! This task is closest to the family...Wonder is needed so that beauty might enter into human life, into society and the nation...We need to marvel at everything that is found in man."* Pope St. John Paul II



Creating a climate of wonder can seem very different from the modern world our schools are called to serve, though this is our calling as educators in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Lancaster. Engaging with the Church's teaching about human loving enables us to share with our young people the wonder of human life and the happiness that is waiting for us in Jesus. As always, this is an invitation, a way to deepen understanding of what it means to be fully human.

The Programme of Study places the Diocese of Lancaster programme next to the statutory obligation it fulfils. Any additional material in HRSE is written in italics so it is easy to identify. Areas from the statutory plan not covered in the HRSE framework are listed at the end of the booklet. Governing bodies and head teachers should be mindful that from 2020 OfSTED will inspect the new 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' and Section 48 will continue to examine provisions in HRSE.

The HRSE programme is firmly embedded in the ethos of our school. This is clearly shown through collective acts of worship, which explore the Gospel, and take the values and virtues raised in these stories and relate it to our everyday life and the relationships we form with God and others. This is clearly illustrated through the schools well thought out programme 'God's big story'.

HRSE is also taught in discreet lessons, through RE and science and the wider curriculum. Through the school's positive behaviour policy and circle times children will learn to be responsible for the choices they make and the consequences of poor choices.

Statutory curriculum areas not covered in the HRSE programme of study, such as basic first aid, aspects of health education and online safety will be delivered by a cross curricular approach or extra workshops as and when required using resources such as 'Life Education' visits.

During circle time, clear ground rules for discussions will be established to ensure that topics are dealt with sensitively by all staff and children alike. Parents will be involved or informed about topics being explored. Supporting resources, such as 'A Journey in Love (EYFS-Year 5)' and 'This is my Body' will be available for parents to view to enable them to support their child's understanding of these sensitive subjects.

## 11. Parents

The Church recognises parents as the first educators of their children. The school should support parents in this task. The role of the school should be 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) Children's 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.

This policy was brought to parents' attention through our newsletter and displayed on our school website for consultation.

The school will involve and support parents in learning about HRSE by:

- sharing the programme of study and published resources to be used,
- sending letters when visitors are coming to school
- sending letters when a sensitive subject is to be taught,
- sending resources to use at home,

- sharing information in the school prospectus and on the school website,
- listening to questions parents may have

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. However, at times, areas of particular sensitivity, such as puberty, school will benefit from additional parental support and at such times, letters will sent home and parents may be invited into school to discuss the content of HRSE lessons.

#### Right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw)

Parents have the right to request that their child not participate in some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request, it is good practice for the headteacher to discuss the application with parents and ensure that they understand the nature and purpose of the curriculum in a Catholic context. A discussion should follow, as appropriate, involving the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. School will want to record and document this process.

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.

The headteacher discusses with parents the benefits of receiving this education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. For example, the possible social or emotional impact of withdrawal, the likelihood of them hearing a peer's version of the content, rather than the teacher's. However, parents may prefer to discuss sex education to their child at home instead.

Following discussions, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the headteacher may want to take into account a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND about readiness/ maturity for the child to receive these lessons and as such a parent, in consultation with school, may withdraw their child.

*Should parents wish to withdraw their child(ren) they must contact the headteacher no later than the start of the school day when the lesson will take place.*

## 12. Teaching HRSE

Mrs Alison Townley is the RE and HRSE subject leader with Mrs Elizabeth Kendall supporting the work of HRSE. They will monitor lessons and work that is done in HRSE. This will be supported by the RE Governor Fr John Gibson.

All classes will be taught HRSE and will use the school designed overview which has been linked with our RE curriculum overview.

The school will deliver "puberty talks" to Year 5 and 6 which covers personal hygiene and how our bodies change as we grow.

*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.*

Teaching and learning about human relationships will be part of the life of the school. However, the programme of study will be taught through cross curricular dimensions where appropriate, such as R.E., science and computing.

Sometimes, the children's learning will be best supported by using other agencies, such as the school nurse, or other visitors to school. Such visitors will be guided to read the protocol for visitors at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School and agree to follow its instruction.

There are elements of the statutory framework that are not covered in the Diocese of Lancaster's HRSE programme. These elements are listed at the end of the 2020 programme of study.

All school policies have a clearly marked section that relates to the teaching of HRSE when appropriate. For example in science activities children learn about their bodies and in computing there is a focus on online safety.

Assessment forms part of the statutory framework. The HRSE programme includes a self audit for schools.

Each year at Our Lady of Lourdes we use the Diocesan self-audit to monitor all aspects of HRSE. Governors use the CES RSE audit tools to monitor their knowledge and understanding of this area. The HRSE framework and the elements of the statutory framework not covered by HRSE are monitored and assessed through whole school planning, written pieces of work, teacher's notes on discussions and targeted lesson evaluations. On occasion, the school uses questionnaires to evaluate students sense of well-being and may use written or practical assessments where appropriate, for example, to evaluate understanding of basic first aid.

### 13. Dealing with difficult questions

The Governing Body ensures that HRSE lessons take place in a positive framework, where students experience a growing appreciation for well being, and that of others, and a deeper understanding that the Church teaches a path of the 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 understanding that staff or other students will not judge these questions. It is vital; therefore, that teachers invest time in creating this framework of mutual trust and care while respecting personal information. Governors recognise the HRSE co-ordinator must be given access to train and support to facilitate teachers, to enable such discussions by creating carefully negotiated ground rules and distancing strategies.

The Department for Education(2000) offers the following guidelines 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 prepare 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 essential to acknowledge this, and to suggest that the pupil or teacher or both together research the subject later;
- If a problem 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 received respectful treatment, 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.

#### 14. Supporting children and young people deemed to be at risk.

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 they 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.

If any member of staff is concerned about questions asked by pupils or information shared by pupils, this is brought to the attention of the Senior Leadership Team who are DSLs. All staff are aware of procedures in school when there is concern about any child.

The school will ensure that this policy is available for all staff, governors, parents and students and the confidential nature of how to obtain advice and guidance as a result of any issues or questions that may arise.

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.

Shared with staff for Consultation December 2016

Shared with parents via website December 2016

Approved by Diocese - March 2017

Approved by Governors - February 2017

Updated October 2019.

Shared with staff for Consultation October 2019

Shared with parents via website for consultation November 2019

