

## Relationships and Sex Education Policy

*A model for adaptation*

### 1. Introduction

#### **Legal Requirements**

The Education Reform Act 1988 requires the school curriculum to *'promote the moral, spiritual, physical and mental development of all pupils and to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of 'adult life'...Combat ignorance and, therefore, increase understanding and promote the ability to make informed decisions.'*

The 1996 Education Act combined all previous legislation on Sex Education and requires Governors of all Maintained Schools to consider the provision of Sex Education and to ensure that where it is provided the school has an associated Policy. Governing Bodies should agree that policy, the content of the programme and the resources used.

#### **Christian Context**

Effective Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) can make a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by pupils if they are to establish and maintain relationships. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and well-being.

Sensitivity and respect should be shown to all children when teaching about personal relationships and sex education. RSE should be taught in a way that ensures there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home/personal circumstances.

All RSE should be set in a context that is consistent with the school's Trust Deed, Christian ethos and values.

- RSE should be based on inclusive Christian principles and values, emphasising respect, compassion, loving care and forgiveness.
- RSE should be taught in the light of the belief in the absolute worth of all people and the unconditional infinite love of God.
- RSE should be sensitive to the circumstances of all children and be mindful of the variety of expressions of family life in our culture, yet it should also uphold the Christian values regarding relationships and marriage as recognised by the Church of England (i.e. Marriage is a gift of God in creation and encompasses consent, public witness, permanence and lifelong fidelity)<sup>1</sup>
- Issues regarding human sexuality should be addressed sensitively
- The exploration of reproduction and sexual behaviour within the Science curriculum should

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<sup>1</sup> Please see Appendix 1 a, 1 b and 2

stand alongside the exploration of relationships, values and morals and Christian belief

Whilst children are given the opportunity to explore their own attitudes, values and beliefs and to develop an individual moral code that will guide their actions, this is exercised within an understanding of the right of people to hold their own views within a framework of respect for others.

Sex education must be an integral part of the personal, social and health education curriculum in all Church Schools. Each school must teach within a framework of Christian values and the Christian understanding that sex is a gift of God as part of creation. Whilst schools may use sex education to inform children about sexual issues, each must do this with regard to matters of morality and individual responsibility, and in a way that allows children to ask and explore moral questions.

## **2. Definition**

Relationships and Sex Education is a lifelong learning process. It is about respect, love and care and the benefits of making and maintaining stable relationships. We recognise that to be human is to experience feelings, seek connections with other people and develop relationships that may be physical or non-physical. RSE seeks to enable young people to feel positive about themselves, manage relationships and access the infrastructure of support to empower them to investigate all possible options available to them.

Each school's approach to RSE should be sensitive to the age and aptitude of the children, but be straightforward and factual in line with the law and good pedagogy. It should reflect the reality of young people's lives today, especially the persuasive influences of television, video, the internet, social media, peer pressure and young people's literature. Where controversial topics arise, schools and academies are asked to use agreed collective judgement, with due regard to this policy.

## **3. Aims and Objectives**

We aim to provide pupils with an age appropriate SRE programme that is tailored to their physical and emotional maturity. The intention is to ensure that through SRE pupils:

- Develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships.
- Are able to correctly name parts of the body and describe how their bodies work
- Are able to protect themselves and ask for help and support
- Are prepared for their development into adulthood
- To know the Christian definition of love in its different forms and contexts <sup>2</sup>
- To acquire information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs and attitudes about sex, sexuality, relationships and feelings.

In doing this, we acknowledge the value of contributing to a spiral curriculum. This curriculum should enable children to make positive choices about their sexual and emotional health, both now and in the future. We seek to achieve this by having three main elements to our programme as outlined in, 'Sex and Relationship Guidance', DfEE ref 0116/2000, p5.

## **4. Key learning objectives**

- Learn to care about others and to be sensitive to their needs and views
- Learn the importance of conscience, Christian values and moral considerations

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 3

- Learn to accept differences between people, not exploit them
- Learn the value of family life, marriage, and the importance of stable, loving and caring relationships for the nurture of children
- Learning the importance and responsibilities of the family unit for all its members
- Learn to respect oneself and others
- Learn to be honest, loyal, trustworthy and faithful in relationships
- Learn to take responsibility for one's actions
- Learn to explore, consider, understand and reflect as part of decision making
- Learn to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- Develop empathy for others
- Learn to manage conflict

### **Additional Guidance for Secondary Schools**

In line with the national societies publication Valuing All God's Children, Guidance for Church of England Schools in Challenging Homophobic Bullying May2014, page 19 point 8 ", within the secondary phase's Sex and Relationships Education programme, sexual orientation should be included as an aspect, ensuring that traditional Anglican views are taught clearly alongside other viewpoints also held by Anglicans, by other Christians, and by those of other faith perspectives and world-views."<sup>3</sup>

### **5. Moral Framework**

Pupils will be taught SRE within a framework which models and encourages the following values:

- Being honest with themselves and others
- Developing a critical awareness of themselves and others
- Learning to show tolerance, understanding, respect and care for others
- Developing an awareness and belief in one's own identity
- Having a positive attitude towards the value of stable relationships for bringing up children
- Acknowledging and understanding diversity with regard to religion, culture and sexual orientation

### **6. Content and Organisation**

RSE is delivered through planned programmes within Science, RE and PSHE. Occasionally, issues about RSE may arise spontaneously in other lessons (e.g. while studying a text in literacy) where it is not the main focus of the lesson. This is not considered to be part of the planned RSE curriculum and consideration must be given as parents or carers cannot withdraw their children in these circumstances.

Delivery of SRE is through the following curriculum topics (*examples only*):

Science:

- Life and Living Processes
- Ourselves
- Healthy Living
- Growth and Heal

RE:

- Friends, Family and Community
- The Natural World

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1988293/valuing%20all%20god's%20children%20web%20final.pdf>

- Christianity
- Ourselves and the Community

Year 6: Preparation for puberty

- PSHE lessons
- Literacy/ maths lessons
- Health Weeks

Focus Days

- A mixture of single sex and mixed grouping is used as appropriate
- The programme will be monitored informally by the PSHE coordinator
- At the request of a parent, children may be withdrawn from the non- statutory part of the programme
- The expertise of the school nurse is used where appropriate

## **7. Equal Opportunities**

SRE will be delivered in line with the school's equal opportunities policy within an atmosphere of mutual respect. Resources selected to support the programme will be free from cultural bias wherever possible and will avoid gender stereotyping. SRE will be available to all pupils regardless of gender, culture or disability.

## **8. Other Issues**

*Confidentiality*

See Confidentiality Policy. This will be adhered to at all times

*Child Protection*

See Safeguarding Policy (With reference to Abuse, Forced Marriages and Female Genital Mutilation where appropriate). Always discuss concerns with the designated member of staff.

*Personal Beliefs*

Beliefs and attitudes of teachers should not influence their teaching of SRE.

*Language and Ground Rules in RSE lessons*

- No one will feel forced to answer a personal question
- No one will be forced to take part in discussions
- Language used should be easily understood by all
- Correct names for body parts will be used
- Meanings of words will be explained in a simple, factual way

## **9. Useful Documents and Resources**

Key references can be found below. These have been taken from "Valuing All God's Children, Guidance for Church of England Schools in Challenging Homophobic Bullying" May 2014 pages 60-62.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1988293/valuing%20all%20god's%20children%20web%20final.pdf>

[http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at\\_school/education\\_for\\_all/quick\\_links/education\\_resources/primary\\_school\\_resources/default.asp](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_school/education_for_all/quick_links/education_resources/primary_school_resources/default.asp)

*Key Stage 1: Love and Sex Matters by Kate Guthrie, Verity Holloway, Katy Staples*

*(www.salisbury.anglican.org). This includes lessons about how wonderful our bodies are and "My family - those who care for me" . These are inclusive materials that affirm all children and help to raise self-esteem.*

*Key Stage 2: Love and Sex Matters by Kate Guthrie, Verity Holloway, Katy Staples (www.salisbury.anglican.org). This includes a lesson on Christian marriage that might be taught in PSHE or RE. It also includes a lesson called 'Firm Foundations' which allows pupils to focus on the question of "What makes people compatible?" This is explored with reference to long-term committed relationships and friendships. There is the possibility that children can raise for themselves the issue of gay relationships - but the focus for this lesson is compatibility and how we make sensible choices. The summary activity asks which behaviours make for life giving relationships and what makes life-limiting or destructive relationships. It is an inclusive activity that allows pupils to begin to form safe guidelines for healthy behaviours within loving and nurturing, non-exploitative relationships.*

*Key Stage 3: Love and Sex Matters by Kate Guthrie, Verity Holloway, Katy Staples (www.salisbury.anglican.org). Includes materials about "Risky choices" and "Why wait."*

*Key Stage 4: Love and Sex Matters by Kate Guthrie, Verity Holloway, Katy Staples (www.salisbury.anglican.org). Includes a lesson which could also be taught at KS3 , in PSHE or RE "Difficult Dilemmas: Sexuality" which uses a Mystery activity to explore whether Jason will have a relationship with Stuart - this dilemma reveals the differing viewpoints held by people of faith and includes the traditional Anglican teachings. There is also a lesson about social networking sites and their impact on relationships, and a lesson about how to navigate the availability of pornography.*

### **Secondary schools**

*• <http://faithandsexuality.co.uk/>*

*It would make a good contrast for pupils to explore the different views expressed by Christians on these two websites:*

*• <http://www.livingout.org/>*

*• <http://www.lqcm.org.uk/resources/>*

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Appendices - Preface and Declarations

Appendix 1a

**Common Worship Marriage Preface**

In the presence of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
we have come together  
to witness the marriage of N and N,  
to pray for God's blessing on them,  
to share their joy  
and to celebrate their love.

**Public Witness**

Marriage is a gift of God in creation  
through which husband and wife may know the grace of God.  
It is given  
that as man and woman grow together in love and trust,  
they shall be united with one another in heart, body and mind,  
as Christ is united with his bride, the Church.

The gift of marriage brings husband and wife together  
in the delight and tenderness of sexual union  
and joyful commitment to the end of their lives.

**Sexual Union  
Permanence**

It is given as the foundation of family life  
in which children are [born and] nurtured  
and in which each member of the family in good times and in bad,  
may find strength, companionship and comfort,  
and grow to maturity in love.

Marriage is a way of life made holy by God,  
and blessed by the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ  
with those celebrating a wedding at Cana in Galilee.  
Marriage is a sign of unity and loyalty  
which all should uphold and honour.  
It enriches society and strengthens community.  
No one should enter into it lightly or selfishly  
but reverently and responsibly in the sight of almighty God.

N and N are now to enter this way of life.  
They will each give their consent to the other  
and make solemn vows,  
and in token of this they will [each] give and receive a ring.  
We pray with them that the Holy Spirit will guide  
and strengthen them,  
that they may fulfil God's purposes  
for the whole of their earthly life together.

**Consent**

**Permanence**

Appendix 1b

**Common Worship Declarations**

*The minister says to the bridegroom*

**N, will you take N to be your wife?**

Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her,  
and, forsaking all others,

**be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?**

**Consent**

**Permanence**

*He answers*

I will.

*The minister says to the bride*

**N, will you take N to be your husband?**

Will you love him, comfort him, honour and protect him,  
and, forsaking all others,

**be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?**

**Consent**

**Permanence**

*She answers*

I will.

## Appendix 2

### Characteristics of Marriage

Cornes, identifies four elements that constitute marriage.<sup>4</sup>

1) **Consent.** Both parties must express the intention and willingness to enter into a binding marital union (Gen 24:5-8,57). It is a 'leaving' of parents and a 'cleaving' to the new spouse (Gen 2:24).

2) **Permanence.** 'Marriage in the Bible is first and foremost a binding covenant'.<sup>5</sup> The Lord will not release a person from vows (Num 30), even vows made rashly (Ecc 5:4-7). Therefore marriage should not be entered into 'lightly or selfishly but reverently and responsibly'.<sup>6</sup> The marriage ordinance also implies exclusivity (a man... his wife) and the 'exclusive nature of marriage is affirmed in the NT'.<sup>7</sup>

3) **Public Witness.** Although, in the Old Testament, marriage was a family rather than 'priestly' matter, both family and public witness were and remain important constituents of this new social relationship (Gen 34:11ff; Deut 22:13-19).

4) **Sexual Union.** The 'one-flesh union' clearly refers to the bodily union of man and wife (Gen 2:24), male and female with the possibility of pro-creation. However, sexual intercourse does not, of itself, create a marriage bond, since marriage is still required after intercourse (Ex 22:16). This aspect of marriage is why it is prohibited between men and women within a certain degree of affinity – e.g. brother and sister, mother and son.

All four of these elements are reflected in the Preface and Declarations of the Marriage Service which also makes clear the purposes for which God ordained marriage, namely, procreation (Gen 1:28), mutual help/comfort (Gen 2:18) and the reciprocal commitment of self-giving love which finds its expression in sexual union (Gen 2:24).<sup>8</sup> Stott notes that all three needs have been strengthened by the Fall.<sup>9</sup> Finally, because it is a creation ordinance, 'instituted by God himself in the time of man's innocency' it is given to all humanity.<sup>10</sup>

Divorce and subsequent remarriage whilst a previous partner is still living is a complex and sensitive issue. The decision not only affects the couple but also the wider community. It is permitted by the Church of England, but Bishops' Guidelines must be followed and ultimately the decision is left to the conscience and judgement of the individual minister. Similarly, issues of gender reassignment are pastorally sensitive. Church of England ministers are permitted to marry those who have had gender legally reassigned but they can also exercise a conscientious objection not to do so.

### References

*Common Worship: Pastoral Services (2005), 2nd edn, Church House Publishing, London.*

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<sup>4</sup> Cornes (2002, p.39).

<sup>5</sup> Wenham & Heth (2002, p.103)

<sup>6</sup> Common Worship: Pastoral Services (2005, p.105)

<sup>7</sup> Cornes (2002, p.41).

<sup>8</sup> Common Worship: Pastoral Services (2005, pp.105-6)

<sup>9</sup> Stott (1984, p.259).

<sup>10</sup> Book of Common Prayer, Marriage Service

*Cornes, A.(2002),Divorce and Remarriage,1st edn, Christian Focus Publications, Scotland.*  
*Stott, J.(1984),Issues Facing Christians Today 1stedn,Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Basingstoke.*  
*Wenham,G.J.&Heth, W.E.(2002), Jesus and Divorce, 2nd edn, Paternoster Press, Carlisle.*

### Appendix 3

#### **Aspects of Love**

C. S. Lewis in his book, *The Four Loves* (1960) using four Greek words for love, describes four basic kinds of human love – affection (*storge*), friendship (*philia*), erotic (*eros*) love and the love of God (*agape*). Lewis states that just as Lucifer a former archangel – perverted himself by pride and fell into depravity, so too can love – commonly held to be the arch-emotion – become corrupt by presuming itself to be what it is not.

**Affection**,– defined as ‘affection especially of parents to offspring’. It is described as a humble quiet love, found between those who are ‘thrown together’ by circumstance. It is the most natural love because it is present without coercion and is the result of fondness by virtue of familiarity. It pays least attention to those attributes that are often deemed valuable, e.g. physical beauty or giftedness, and is therefore able to transcend most discriminating factors.

The word is not used in Scripture although there are many examples of it, e.g. the command to ‘honour father and mother’. The negative form is used twice

Romans 1:31 – they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy.

2 Timothy 3:3 – without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good,

Romans 12:20 uses a compound of *phileo* and *storge*.

**Friendship** – This is the love of friendship, best friends, and the fellowship of being with those people you enjoy usually because of shared interests or activities. It was exalted as a virtue in ancient cultures whereas contemporary society rather ignores it. Lewis recognises that it is not a ‘biological love’. By contrast, without erotic love we would not have been begotten, without affection we would not have been reared, whereas we can live and breed without friendship. Friendship is ‘a relation between men at their highest level of individuality’.

John 21:15-17, describes Jesus' restoral of Peter, where the different words used seem to convey some import:

Jesus asked, ‘do you *agapao* me?’

Peter replied, ‘I *phileo* you.’

Jesus asked, ‘do you *agapao* me?’

Peter replied, ‘I *phileo* you.’

Jesus asked, ‘do you *phileo* me?’

Peter replied, ‘I *phileo* you.’

We are not commanded to *phileo* anyone because this form of love depends on feelings. Examples of use are: John 5:20, 11:3, 36, 12:25, 16:27, 20:2; Ac 28:2; Ro 12:10; 1Ti 6:10; 2Ti 3:4; Tit 2:4, 3:4; Heb 13:1; 3Jo 9; and Re 3:19.

**Eros** – This type of love covers everything from queasy stomachs and warm fuzzy feelings to strong sensual passion. It can be selfish – one person ‘wants’ another’ (cf. Marriage Service, ‘all that I am I give to you’, i.e. reciprocated, consensual yielding of oneself to another). In order to exist eros is dependent upon the situation and circumstances. It is also held captive to each person's perception. For example, if someone perceives a particular quiet evening dinner with candles to be romantic, eros will thrive. However, passion becomes squashed for someone whenever he or she interprets the current situation to be undesirable. Eros thus grows strong and then wastes away based upon our perceptions. Whilst the word does not appear in Scripture, the Song of Solomon is a highly passionate love poem expressing erotic love between a man and a woman.

**Agape** - The Greek word that refers to the love of God, one of the kinds of love we are to have for people, is agape. Lewis recognises it as the highest form of love and a specifically Christian virtue. Agape is the very nature of God, for God is love (1 John 4:7-12, 16b). The big key to understanding agape is to realize that it can be known from the action it prompts. People today are accustomed to thinking of love as a feeling, but that is not necessarily the case with agape love. Agape is love because of what it does, not because of how it feels.

God so ‘loved’ (agape) that He gave His Son. It did not feel good to God to do that, but it was the loving thing to do. Christ so loved (agape) that he gave his life. He did not want to die, but he loved, so he did what God required. A mother who loves a sick baby will stay up all night long caring for it, which is not something she wants to do, but is a true act of agape love.

The point is that agape love is not simply an impulse generated from feelings. Rather, agape love is an exercise of the will, a deliberate choice. This is why God can command us to love our enemies (Matt. 5:44; Exod. 23:1-5). The Marriage Service does not ask ‘Do you love’ (present), but ‘Will you love’ (future), Future feelings cannot be predicted but a commitment can be made to future actions.

Love is the distinctive character of the Christian life in relation to other Christians and to all humanity. The ‘loving’ thing to do may not always be easy, and true love is not ‘mushy sentimentalism.’ There is often a cost to genuine love.